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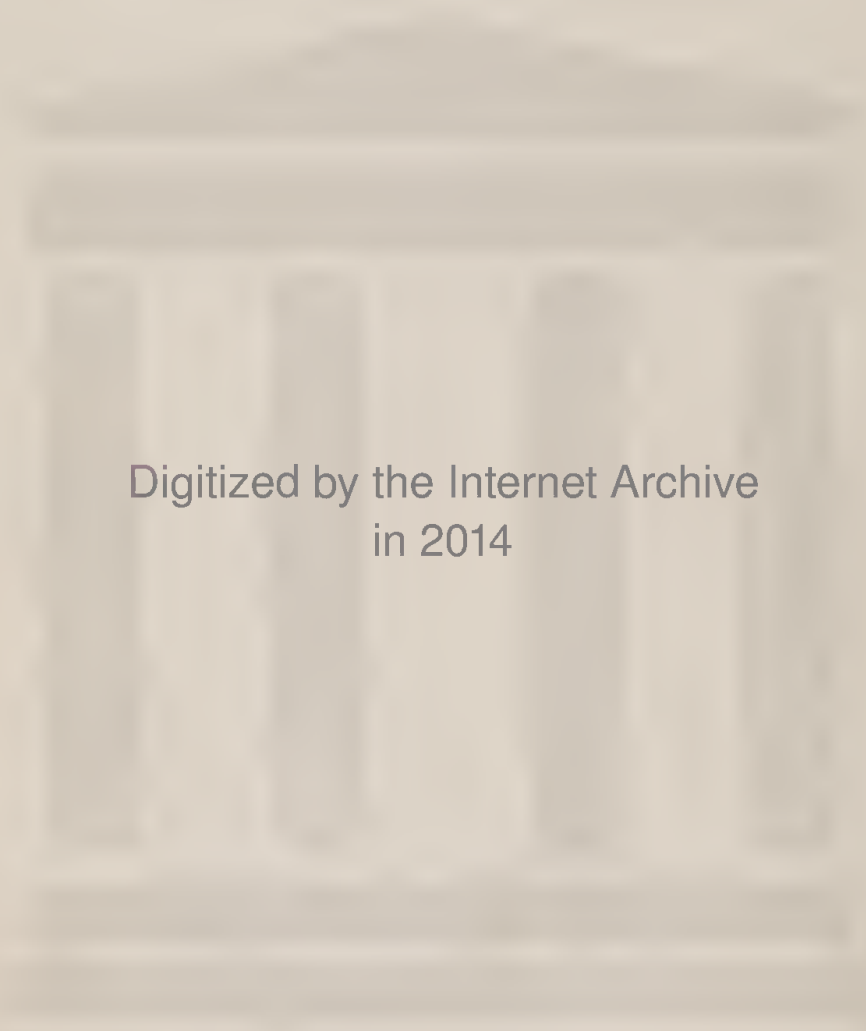

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THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

LATE VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH:

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D.

MINISTER OF STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PRINTED FOR EBENEZER PALMER

18, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXI.

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PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

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THE PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE Publisher has now fulfilled his engagement with his Subscribers; and after a continued and regular publication, which has extended over a period of nearly five years, he has the pleasure of presenting to them, according to the conditions which he submitted in his prospectus, a complete and Uniform Edition of the whole Writings of the Rev. DR. HAWKER, with the single exception of his 'Commentary on the Holy Scriptures.'

It is necessary, however, for him to enter into a few particulars, which, if not clearly explained, might allow of the idea, that some minor pieces were either carelessly or purposely omitted. It may not perhaps be generally known, that DR. HAWKER after the publication of a work frequently extracted some striking portion of it, and sometimes adding thereto additional observations, presented it to the public in

the form of a tract. With the title of some of these the reader will have been familiar, and will feel disappointed in not finding them under their titles:—'The Converted Jew,' 'The Stable Boy;' 'Choice, a tract on Election;' and others which might be named: some of which are extracted from the 'Zion's Pilgrim;' some from the 'Visits to and from Jesus,' &c. are of this description. The reader may, therefore, rest satisfied, that should he not readily discover a particular tract, it is for this reason; and that the Index will without any difficulty refer him to the volume in which it is to be found. In all cases, however, where additional observations were affixed, when the tract was republished alone, these additions are inserted.

The 'Spiritual Gleaner,' a work which was compiled by Dr. Hawker, and which contains striking passages from the writings of eminent ministers, with notes by him, is not of course contained herein; the nature of the Work precluded it: had that been inserted, 'Milton's Paradise Lost,' 'Bunyan's Pilgrim,' 'Hervey's Meditations,' 'The Life of the Rev. Henry Tanner,' &c. &c. editions of which were published with notes by our Author, might, on the same principle, have been expected.

The various treatises are arranged according to a draught in manuscript which Dr. Hawker furnished for that purpose

to the Publisher before his decease, which, with the kind assistance of the Rev. Dr. Williams, has been his guide throughout the whole.

Respecting the Memoir, it was the Author's design to have written it himself; but this his decease prevented. Application was then made to his eldest son, the Rev. John Hawker, who expressed the utmost readiness to compile it, if he could obtain access to sundry papers, which after the Doctor's death had fallen into the possession of his executrix, Miss Anna Hawker. These papers had unfortunately all been destroyed. And the Publisher's last application was to the Rev. Dr. Williams, who had been, he was aware, since the Doctor's decease, collecting materials for such an undertaking; but who had decidedly refused to compile until the proposal met the approbation of Dr. Hawker's family, from whom he has received many authentic particulars. To this clergyman, therefore, the public are indebted for a Memoir of the venerable Hawker; and the Publisher entertains a full confidence from the very long intimacy which subsisted between the deceased and his Biographer; from the abilities of Dr. Williams, and from his well-known attachment to the doctrines which were so ably advocated by Dr. Hawker, that his Subscribers will have every reason to be satisfied that he was persuaded to undertake it.

The General Index has been carefully compiled by the Rev. Samuel Stennett, of Sheerness; and the Publisher flatters himself that his Subscribers will have reason to acknowledge, he could not have selected a more suitable person; for that which it is of so much importance should be correctly executed.

It would be totally irrelevant for the Publisher to say a word in commendation of Dr. Hawker, or of his Works; his humble meed of praise would shed no additional lustre on his name; and his Works have too long been the cherished treasure of many, who have been directed by them in their way to Zion, to require a comment. By them, he being dead, yet speaketh.

The Publisher's last and most pleasing duty is, to return his grateful thanks to those who have kindly assisted in the progress of the Publication. And first, he takes this public opportunity of acknowledging the readiness with which the editors of the Spiritual and of the Gospel Magazines gave him permission to insert, in his edition, all the communications by Dr. Hawker inserted in either of those periodicals; with both of which the Doctor corresponded; and of which permission, the Publisher has to the full availed himself.

To the Rev. John Williams, D.D. the Publisher has

many thanks to return, not only for his compilation of the Author's Memoir, but also for the continued and valuable advice which he so cheerfully gave throughout the whole progress of the Work. The Subscribers are also indebted to Dr. Williams for the insertion of some tracts by Dr. Hawker, which, had they not been furnished by him, could not possibly have been obtained.

To the Rev. John Hawker, to Mrs. Hodson, and to every other member of Dr. Hawker's family, the Publisher begs also to present an expression of his gratitude, for every assistance which they have rendered to the Publication, while passing through the press.

To the Secretary of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, the Publisher is indebted for the loan of the Sermon which Dr. Hawker preached in aid of that valuable Institution, and he begs here to return his thanks to that gentleman for it.

For the permission which was so readily given by Mr. John Kent, for his Elegy on the Death of Dr. Hawker to be inserted in the Memoir, the Publisher is also much obliged.

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kindness with which his Lordship allowed him the pleasure of introducing the Work to the public, under the patronage of his Lordship's name.

He has now only to commend the Publication to HIM, whose name is above every name, who so frequently blessed the ministrations of his servant, with a sincere and earnest prayer, that He will accompany the perusal also of his Publications with His blessing, and that they may be rendered in his hand a humble instrument of turning many souls to Christ, and tend to the edification and comfort of all the true Israel of God, who may peruse their contents.

PATERNOSTER ROW,
June 30, 1831.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.,

LATE VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

For the convenience of those persons whose circumstances may prevent their purchase of the Uniform Edition of the Author's Works, for which this Memoir was written, and to which it is attached, the Publisher has taken off a limited impression of it separately.

The Uniform Edition forms Ten Volumes, 8vo.; and is sold in boards, price £6. 6s. A few Copies have been printed in a very superior manner, on a royal paper, price, in extra cloth boards, £12. 12s.

PATERNOSTER ROW,
June 30, 1831.

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D. D.

Biography is a study as useful and profitable, as it is interesting and gratifying, when it emanates from a desire to glorify the Creator, rather than to eulogize the creature. Although the biography of scripture may, from its general brevity, be considered biography in miniature, yet the biographical sketches there given are inimitably beautiful, without any artificial drapery to embellish the portrait—all is simple —all is striking—truth is, in each, its prominent feature, and simplicity its richest adorning. Every sketch, though as brief as a monumental inscription, is, like that of Jabez, (1 Chron. iv. 9.) replete with instruction, consolation, and encouragement to all the tried household of faith.

Next to the biography of scripture, nothing perhaps more fully pictures to the mind, the goodness, the faithfulness, the unceasing regard of our covenant God to his chosen people, in all ages, than the lives of such eminent men, as have been and still are raised up of Him to feed, console, and instruct them in the mysteries of his kingdom. Although the Memoirs of that venerable father in God, the Rev. Robert Hawker, may form but a small section in the annals of the church of Christ, yet it will be a very interesting one to many, who have been, through his faithful labours, either brought to "the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus," or blest with clearer views of their election of God the Father, of their redemption through Christ our

Lord, and of their sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And, whilst here I pause to bow the knee, before the Divine Majesty, to make my best acknowledgments, which are but poor at best, of the ten thousand obligations, which I am under, to the Eternal Three in One, for bringing me, a sabbath wanderer, under the ministry of this dear man of God, and for opening mine eyes to see the wonderful things of his law, and for all the subsequent mercies, which have flowed, from this one mercy, to me the unworthiest of his ministers; I cannot but express my most ardent wish, that all, under whose eye this record of divine grace shall fall, who have been awakened, edified, or refreshed instrumentally through him, may share with me in the same overflowings of joy, and unite with me in the same ascription of praise, in the review of such Ebenezers as these, that "for the gift bestowed upon him, thanks may be given by many on his behalf," 2 Cor. i. 11.

The Rev. Robert Hawker, whose praise is in his works, which must ever endear him to the church of Christ, and whose memorial, deduced from authentic resources, I esteem it a distinguished honour to record, was born on the 13th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1753, in the city of Exeter, the metropolis of the county of Devon, which is also said to be the birth-place of the celebrated Richard Hooker, whose work, on Ecclesiastical Polity, obtained for him, from King James the First, the appellation of the *learned* and *judicious;* and of Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library in the University of Oxford. It may not be unprofitable to remark, that, in the very city where Richard Hooker was born, in 1553, the champion, in his day, of free-will ability and conditional election, which doctrines have had their baneful and widening influence over the professing churches of the realm for these two hundred years past, *there* also was born, in 1753, Robert Hawker, whom God raised up to combat those growing errors, and to shew to the churches, how derogatory to his glory, and inconsistent

with his word, are such doctrines as lay the foundation of our election or salvation in human merit, or human caprice, and not in free and sovereign grace—doctrines which frustrate the need of regeneration, or the Spirit's work on the human heart.

If it had not been ascertained from his family, the writer of this memoir must have said of him, what the Rev. John Prince, in his History of the Worthies of Devon, has said of Hooker, " whether he was born at Exeter, or Heavy-Tree, near adjoining, is yet a question ;" for I have also heard both places mentioned as the birth-place of *our* author, who has attained unto the first rank among the worthies of his country. Later biographers have not hesitated to decide, that Exeter was the birth-place of Hooker. And it appears, that there was an estate, at Heavy-Tree, belonging to the family of Dr. HAWKER, which, no doubt, led to the conjecture, that there was the place of his nativity ; but he was born in the city, in the corner house of a street, which leads from Mary Steps Church to the Bridge Church, where his father practised as a surgeon ; and on the 14th of May following, at Mary Steps Church, he was presented before the Lord, at the font of baptism, as attested by the church register. Although it may seem of little moment, where the heirs of glory were born, or where they breathed their last ; yet as the sacred historians, in the records of God's Israel, are sometimes directed to confer this honour on places so distinguished, we cannot deem it too insignificant to mark the spot. If an angel from heaven were sent to us on an embassy of mercy, to make known some special favour, with what grateful feelings should we thereafter recognize the spot, where he first descended, or where he left the last impress of his foot, when bounding from the earth, he stretched his celestial pinions to be gone ! And are not the ministers of Christ, the angels of the churches, sent on embasssies of love to make known the riches of his grace to his chosen, his redeemed people ?

I wait not to inquire what were his armorial bearings; but he tells us of[a] a royal family, into which he knew his adoption, whose supporters, helmet, crest, shield, and motto, are all of grace, and "the gift of grace," Rom. v. 15; according to the charter of the kingdom, formed in the ancient settlements of eternity. His grandfather was a physician and an alderman of the said city of Exeter, a man, in his day, much beloved and respected. His father, whose name was Jacob, died at the early age of thirty-six years, and left him an infant, his only surviving child, at that time not more than fourteen months old. An infant daughter had been previously removed by death. From these very circumstances, he became more endeared to his bereaved and widowed mother, whose hopes and happiness seemed now to concentrate in the future prosperity of her beloved and only son. He had also two aunts, who felt a deep interest in his welfare; but one of them more particularly blended her cares and assiduities, with those of his mother, in watching over his education, and instilling into his memory select portions of the word of God. In recommending this practice, I have heard him say, how greatly he was indebted, in after life, to this plan pursued with him, for the readiness and exactness with which he could quote the chapters and verses, which from earliest childhood he had committed to memory.

'It is in my views,' saith he, 'a solemn consideration, that our little children, from the false refinement of the times, are now taught their A. B. C. in books, which, for the most part, are more suited to keep them from the knowledge of the Lord, than to make that season of infancy, when first impressions are strong impressions, the time of bringing them into acquaintance with the Lord. It was my happiness to have been taught my letters in the first books of learning, which gathered all the lessons from the scriptures. And now I find cause to bless God for a mercy, of which, at that

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[a] See his Works, Vol. X. page 150.

time, I was unconscious of the value.' 'And I take occasion from this place,' continues he, thus speaking of *infant* education, 'from long experience of the blessedness of this plan of teaching, earnestly and affectionately to recommend to all godly parents and teachers of schools, to have their little charge taught from the scriptures of truth only, "which are able to make them wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus,"'[a] 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Under this impression, that the lessons from which our children are taught, should be as much as possible taken from the word of God, he has for this purpose compiled the Child's First and Second Books, consisting of lessons from scripture, or illustrative of scripture, from one, two, and three syllables, to larger portions, with practical observations. Several useful and instructive catechisms were also drawn up by him with this view, to bring the children therein taught to an early acquaintance with the word of truth. How amiable does the man of first-rate talents, the scholar of deep erudition, the polemic divine appear, in condescending to prepare the first books of learning for our infant children, to guard them against the delusions of error! Did ever the venerable Dr. Isaac Watts shine with more lustre, than when thus employed?

As soon as he had attained to a sufficient age, our young Hawker, to qualify him for some learned profession, was sent to the endowed Grammar School at Exeter, where he made a considerable proficiency in the Latin and Greek classics. I know not under what master he studied Hebrew, but his critical knowledge of the three learned languages gave him an advantage in polemical divinity which he knew how to appreciate. Though, when a youth, he was like too many of the same age, frivolous, gay, and thoughtless; yet he was not inattentive to his studies, nor satisfied with superficial attainments. With a mind ardent, unwearied,

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[a] Vol. X. page 122.

and capable of mastering any science; with a genius excursive, inventive, and aspiring; with a memory quick, capacious, and retentive, he was not disposed to rest satisfied until he had attained unto the summit of his wishes, in all the pursuits of literature.

Although from his infancy, the child ROBERT had manifested a strong bias to the clerical profession, by the pleasure which he felt in frequently assuming the habit of a minister, and in rehearsing some part of the church service; in mounting his imitative pulpit, and delivering his juvenile sermon; yet so strong was the predilection of his mother for his father's profession, that her highest ambition was to place him under the instruction of some learned practitioner, where he might acquire a competent knowledge of surgery and medicine; with which art and mystery she herself was not unacquainted; for to many of the poor in their affliction has she often prescribed with the ability of a physician, and in their emergency performed the office of a skilful midwife. After he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of the classics, an opportunity offered of placing him under a respectable surgeon of the name of White, at Plymouth, who was afterwards an alderman of that borough, and took an active part in procuring for him the nomination to the vicarage of Charles. Many eminent surgeons were there at Exeter, under whom he might have been placed with advantage, yet none but this situation would suffice in the purpose of the divine mind; for here was to be formed a link in the chain of his eventful life, which led to his future sphere of eminent usefulness. I beg here to call the attention of the reader to the gracious providence of our God, who even before they know him, or the purposes of his love towards them, directs the feet of his saints. To be near her son, to share his assiduities, and to watch over his morals, thither also his mother removed; but little did she know, at that period, how much the glory of God was engaged, and the eternal welfare of many of her fellow creatures was concerned, in the

measures which she had been thus unconsciously adopting. "This also cometh from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," Isa. xxviii. 29.

Whilst at Plymouth, he kept up a correspondence with his beloved aunts. A letter to him, from one of them, is still preserved by the family, of which I have been favoured with the perusal, and have made extracts, which I hope will not be unacceptable, as it demonstrates his habits and pursuits when a youth. From this letter his aunt appears to have been a woman of a superior mind, clear in her judgment, sound in her principles, deep in penetration, and well acquainted with men and things. Had Hippocrates been instructed in a christian school, he could not have enjoined on his pupils more wholesome counsel. After informing him that she had received, with pleasure, his letter, enclosing some poetical compositions, consisting of a fable, and pastoral elegy, which juvenile productions are now lost; she gives him this memento for his future practice, 'Always to consider, that the life of the lowest individual is as dear to himself as that of the greatest personage, and therefore, not to be trifled with by the ignorance or inexperience of a weak or raw practitioner'—'A consideration,' continues she, 'which I fear is not always attended to by the physical tribe. I the rather say this to you, as you seem, in your last, to condemn (which I am much pleased with) the hasty and overforward prescriptions of beginners. I hope you will never do so, until you are versed in the theoretic part; and then, when you come to launch out into practice, walk by that golden rule, of 'doing to others as you would wish to be done unto.' Deal with your patients by conscientious, not lucrative or vain-glorious views. Think that every life and every case that is committed to your care you must give an account of; which will lead a good man, (such as I wish my dear boy to be) not only to be careful what he does, but also to implore the divine assistance to succeed his endeavours, and think himself happy in being *the instrument only* of good to his

fellow creatures.' She then refers him to Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha, chap. xxxviii. 1—14, which speaks of the honour due to physicians, and of their duty to "pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that which they give for ease, and remedy to prolong life." This letter bears date, June 11, 1770, when he was about the age of seventeen. If any juvenile students, in the school of medicine or surgery, may at any time peruse these pages, may the Lord bless to their future success and happiness the sage advice of this amiable woman. Related as he was to those who were capable of giving such good and excellent counsel, he was himself, no doubt, the child of many prayers. It appears, from her letter, that she was more concerned to see her nephew a *good* man, than a *great* man. But how very far was it from the conceptions of her mind, when counselling the young surgeon in these matters, how great, how useful, how eminent a character her dear boy (as she affectionately calls him) would, in after life, become in the church of Christ, as the vicar of the very parish in which he was then training for a different profession. How marvellously the Lord works in developing the purposes of his providence and grace, and how differently ofttimes from our view of things, in the training and settlement of our children.

Although he was blest with good instruction and wholesome counsel from them, who, no doubt, followed up their admonitions with prayer to God for his blessing upon them, yet amidst all these advantages his heart was not changed. This can only be effected by an Almighty power. When my aged father has been stating some of the instances of frolic and fun, in which he has seen him engaged, with others of his own age and rank, at the door of the Old Tabernacle, Briton-side, Plymouth, and even within the walls, where no shaft of the archer, however expert or successful, had received a commission to reach him, the change subsequently wrought has ofttimes elicited the exclamation—who would have thought, that a youth, so inconsiderate and full

of levity, would have become so faithful and devoted a minister of the gospel! "This is the Lord's doings; it is marvellous in our eyes!" Psalm cxviii. 23.

I have heard it said, that in his juvenile thoughtlessness, he once threw a squib among the congregation, where the very man (the Rev. Henry Tanner, of Exeter,) was preaching, of whose interesting memoirs he afterwards became the gratuitous editor. But whether this took place at Exeter or Plymouth, I know not, nor can I say, at this remote period of time, from whom I received the information. In the preface to these memoirs, he states, that in the simple and unadorned path of doctrine, Mr. Tanner treads on equal ground with Bunyan. This work he undertook for the benefit of this worthy man's widow and daughter, who were left in indigent circumstances. A widow, whose arithmetic of life amounted to no less than *eighty-one* years. 'Surely,' saith he, 'it is impossible, but that every one who venerates age, and knows how to feel for the desolated winter of it, must wish well to this publication. It will, I am persuaded, strike their minds with full conviction, (I confess, it did mine most powerfully) that a life of labour, such as Mr. Tanner's was, and that life protracted to so long a period as *eighty-seven* years, possesseth no small claim on the benevolence of all, and especially of the religious: and when to this consideration it be added, that, since the slender means, afforded him for those long and wearisome services, allowed him no possibility of making the least reserve for relations so near and dear to him as his aged partner and daughter; surely the very inability seems to be the result of Infinite Wisdom in the appointment, that it might be compensated another way.' The result, I might add, of Infinite Wisdom indeed, that the youth, who thus irreverently and thoughtlessly disturbed the Divine worship where he was officiating, should, in process of time, though in a situation so dissimilar, do him this honour to edit his memoirs, to recommend his works, and to administer to the wants of his aged

widow and daughter. May all who need this grace, whether churchmen or dissenters, learn a lesson of liberality from the vicar of Charles!

Before our young surgeon had completed his nineteenth year, he formed an attachment to Miss Anne Rains, the eldest daughter of Lieutenant Rains, afterwards Captain in the Royal Navy, and was married to her, at the parish church of Charles, Plymouth, on the 6th day of January, in the year 1772, when their united ages did not exceed thirty-six years. A truly young couple to embark in so momentous an undertaking. How far early marriages are prudent, must depend upon circumstances; but, in some cases, it has a tendency to prevent or correct illicit connexions. Theirs was an attachment of early and mutual affection; and what, in the character of Zion's Pilgrim, he speaks on this subject, may have been the genuine feelings of his heart.[a] 'The Lord hath given me many who are very near and very dear to my affection in the ties of nature. Even in the moment while writing, I feel all the tender influences of the claim, and pause to lift an eye of humble supplication to the God of all grace, that he may give to "every one of them grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Grace doth not destroy, it only heightens and refines our feelings. Among the number, there was *one* more intimately wrapped about my heart, whose influence, in every thing but religion, I have ever found it to be both my interest and happiness to feel; for whom there needs no other claim than nature's feelings to call forth every energy of the mind, in the promotion of *her* welfare; and in grace my earliest and latest prayers for her salvation will cease but with my breath.'

It was, however, his lot to consign her mortal remains to the silent tomb, ten years previously to his own departure. She died on the 3rd day of April, in the year 1817. They shared each other's affections, in the domestic enjoyments of life,

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[a] Vol. III. page 105.

more than five-and-forty years. By her, who was his only wife, he had *eight* children, who all arrived to years of maturity, and the greater number are now living. 1. *John*, the eldest son, who was the resident curate of Stoke Damarel for many years, (of which parish all Devonport forms but a part,) and is now the minister of Eldad Chapel, in the borough of Plymouth, which was built by the affectionate zeal of his friends on his quitting that curacy, and the mayor of Plymouth laid the foundation stone. He married a lady of Oxford, of the name of Sadler, by whom he has a large family. 2. *Mary*, the eldest daughter, who married Thomas Hodson, Esq. an opulent merchant of London; the benevolence of this lady's character will appear in the subsequent pages of this Memoir. 3. *Anna*, who was never married, but resided with her father to his death, to whom she paid the most vigilant and unwearied attention. She was left his sole executrix, but survived him only three years and a few days. She died, to meet him in glory, April 18, 1830. 4. *Jacob*, who serves the curacy of Stratton, Cornwall. He married a lady of the name of Drewitt, of Plymouth, sister to the Rev. Thomas Drewitt, of Cheddar, Somerset, who also married a Miss Sadler, sister to the lady above-mentioned. The eldest son of Mr. Jacob Hawker, before he had attained to eighteen years, published a small volume of poems, entitled "*Tendrils*," the first shootings of the young vine, in its natural and unpruned luxuriancy, which might, under divine training, produce a vintage of richest clusters. He has since sent to the press an Oxford prize poem, on the Ruins of Pompeii. Without conducting the reader 'on the foot of wandering' into fairy haunts by wizard streams, I take the liberty to quote, as a specimen of his poetical talents, a few lines descriptive of the death of Jabin:

'He died a death which none should die,
Whate'er their deeds, whate'er their guilt,
His pangs were dear to woman's eye,
By woman's hand his blood was spilt.

For him no hostile bow was bent,
For him was drawn no foeman's sword,
His death-place was the peaceful tent,
His death, the judgment of the Lord.'

If his more mature muse still love to wander on the flowery banks of poesy, may he know what it is to drink largely of that fountain, whence Zion's minstrels drew their inspiration and their song—a song, which no man can learn but the redeemed of the Lord, Rev. xiv. 3. 5. *Thomas*, who is also in the established church, and serves the curacy of Trusham, near Chudleigh, Devon. He first married a daughter of counseller Vincent, brother to Nicholas Vincent, Esq. admiral of the red, from whom Dr. Hawker received the interesting anecdote narrated in his Sailor Pilgrim,[a] so illustrative of the gracious government of God in his providence. Since her decease he is again married, and has a large family. 6. *Charles*, who was a fine youth, brought up as a surgeon, but was removed by death, in the month of May, 1816. He had a wen on his eye, which some surgeon in London advised to be taken off, to which he assented, unknown to his father; but inflammation succeeded the operation, and terminated in death. 7. *Caroline*, who is married to a gentleman of the name of Ball, an architect of science and taste, who, at the time of her father's decease, resided at Totness, to superintend the erection of a new bridge across the river Dart. 8. *Sarah*, who was married to Captain Bowden, commander in the royal Navy. She died in the month of November, 1824, aged 32 years. The aged father felt most keenly the decease of this his youngest and beloved daughter; for whom he preached a funeral sermon[b] three days after her death, and previously to her interment, which has since been published. In the advertisement he thus refers to the mournful event:—'It pleased the Lord to remove from me, by death, my beloved Sarah, the youngest of my children. I found it

[a] Vol. III. page 430.

[b] Vol. IV. page. 41.

right to be at my post of duty as usual, on the Lord's day; and when the time for the pulpit service came, after humble supplication to the Lord, that as my day so might my strength be, I addressed the Lord's people to the following purport:—' I believe, that my attendance here this morning was not expected by some, and may be a matter of surprize to others. Those to whom it is known, that the Lord has made a breach in my family, by the death of my child, may have supposed that my absence would have been excusable. But it is not so with me. I dared not that my private feeling should take place of my public labours. The Lord's cause supersedes with me every other consideration. True indeed it is, that by this event, the Lord hath made a deep wound in my heart. The incision hath been sharp and painful. And perhaps the more poignant, from my age and increasing infirmities. Like an old tree of the forest, over which the storms of many a winter have beaten, my greenest branch is now broken off, and I myself am withering. But a wisdom, which cannot err, hath so appointed; and sure I am, that in this, as in every other dispensation of the Lord to his people, a love which cannot fail, nor change, is also at the bottom: and while I bend submissively to the Lord's holy will, I hear the Lord's voice graciously speaking, in tender, but sovereign language, " Be still and know that I am God !" Ps. xlvi. 10. It is my mercy, therefore, that the Lord dries the tear of nature, and grants me the suited grace. Moreover, according to the course of years, I have but a few sabbaths more to enjoy below; every one becomes the more precious in ministering to holy things, before the Lord shall take me home to the everlasting sabbath, which is above.'

Many an eminent man of God has felt the same desire, and made the same apology, for seeking consolation in the house of God, under bereaving afflictions, and could not yield to the custom, however excusable it may appear, to be absent a single sabbath from the assembly of his people. But to return from this digression, to which the mention of his

youngest daughter naturally led, and from making so beautiful and appropriate quotation I could not resist; especially when I consider, that many may peruse these Memoirs who have not before noticed this funeral sermon. It evidences the full affection of the bereaved father, and the conscientious devotedness of the aged minister. When he died, including his grandchildren and their parents on both sides, there were of his family no less than forty descendants.

After his marriage, our young surgeon, (for so in continuing the narrative I may as yet style him) to make himself proficient in his studies, and to qualify him for practice, went to London, and attended lectures at St. Thomas's, Guy's, and other hospitals. On his return, he obtained an appointment, as assistant surgeon, in the Royal Marines. To the practice of flogging, for the purpose of enforcing either naval or military discipline, he was very averse; and the poor delinquent, who was doomed to suffer, was sure to find, in his generous surgeon, a willing and powerful advocate. If, on enquiry, he found a single good trait in his character, he was ready to plead it in his favour, and oft-times with success. This readiness and lenity endeared him to the men. Whether any particular predilection for this corps induced him to accept the appointment, I know not, but the Lord had other things in view. Here our 'Zion's Warrior' was brought to an acquaintance with the terms of the military school, which the better prepared him, in his subsequent life, to write the pleasing interesting work which bears that title—'The Zion's Warrior, or Christian Soldier's Manual, in which the duties and occupations of the military life are spiritualized and improved.' Though he might have looked forward to a promotion in his Britannic Majesty's service, the King of kings was training him for a very different warfare, and a more important post of honour.

From the sermons preached and published on the occasion of his death, through the inaccurate information given to some of the gentlemen who thus honoured this distinguished

servant of Christ, it would appear, that he was abroad in the army as an assistant surgeon; that after having been abroad for some time, the regiment to which he belonged came home, and was quartered at Devonport; that in consequence of having received religious impressions, he quitted the army, relinquished his profession, and entered himself at college. But I am assured from his family and from his own testimony, that these statements are incorrect. Except for a short time, as deputy chaplain to the garrison, when vicar of Charles, he never belonged to any other corps than the Royal Marines, and to that corps perhaps not longer than three years. He was never abroad in the army in any capacity; and it is well known, that when he first entered the ministry, his views of gospel doctrines were very indistinct, and in some points erroneous. I feel persuaded that my correction of these mis-statements will be more acceptable, than otherwise, to the gentlemen who have perhaps been unintentionally misled in their enquiries. Truth is their object, their aim, their theme, their glory.

From what cause he directed his thoughts towards the church, I am left to conjecture. Whether he thought the church a larger field for the display of his talents, for talents he possessed of no common magnitude, and he could not be unconscious of them; but it appears, that it was not from lucrative motives, for he tells us, that at that period he had no other prospect than of living and dying a curate.[a] Or whether, as some have stated, that his feelings were so acute at the sufferings of others, that he could not follow the chirurgical profession with any degree of pleasure or comfort to himself. Whilst he has been only listening to the tale of woe, the starting tear has ofttimes attested the tender feeling of his heart. Or whether the good instruction instilled into his mind by his pious aunt, had left an impression there, that under indistinct views of the truth, there was still a

[a] Vol. IX. page 401.

latent desire, if he were but *the instrument only*, of doing good to others. Whatever was the motive, the Lord had a work to perform by him, and therefore his views were directed towards college to prosecute there his preparatory studies.

Although now a married man, and the father of several children, so bent was he on his new pursuit, which with him had always been a favourite one, that he gladly resumes his classical studies, resigns his situation in the Marine Corps, and was matriculated, at Magdalen Hall, in the university of Oxford, May 27, 1778, as it appears by the college books. In his circumstances, the anticipation of three or four years' residence at college was not very pleasing. But the Lord so paved his way to a speedy entrance on his ministerial labours, that in the autumn of the same year, he was offered a title to a curacy in Cornwall, if he could obtain ordination from the bishop of the diocese. This was not very probable; yet having obtained the most respectable testimonials in his favour, and feeling confident in his own abilities, he made application to the bishop, and stated to his lordship, that although he was not of long standing on the university books, yet if his lordship would condescend to examine him as to his literary attainments and qualifications to undertake the sacred office of deacon, if he were found incompetent, he should deem it no hardship to return to his studies. From the strong recommendation received in his favour, and the modest frankness apparent in his conduct, the bishop was induced to meet his request. He was examined and approved, and ordained deacon by the right reverend Dr. Ross, then bishop of Exeter, as it appears by his letter of orders, on the 20th of September, 1778, at the Palace Chapel, to the curacy of Saint Martins, near Loe, in the diocese of Exeter, and county of Cornwall. To this curacy, after having passed through his academical studies at the same hall, his eldest son was also ordained deacon, twenty-four years after. He held this curacy about three

months, for it so occurred, that a curate was wanted at the parish church of Charles, Plymouth, where he had resided so long, and was so much respected, and from which place he had not yet removed his family. In consequence of this vacancy, he was soon after appointed curate, by the Rev. John Bedford, then vicar of Charles. Here again we see, how, under the guidance of an unerring pilot, the swell of the tide carried his destined bark into the very haven where it should be. Had his ordination been deferred but a very short time, another clergyman had succeeded to this curacy, and thrown an impediment in the way of his nomination to the vicarage, which opened so wide a field for his future labours. His name first appears as curate, in the marriage register, on the 30th of December, 1778; but in a note to a sermon, which he preached after his return from Gloucestershire, in 1825, and which was afterwards published, he gives us this memorial :[a]—'The first sermon I preached at Charles' Church, was Nov. 22, 1778: and the text was, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," 2 Cor. v. 20. 'I have only,' saith he, 'to renew the proclamation of the church's warfare, which, for nearly half a century ago, in this church, the Lord then enabled me to do; and, under one form or other, he has graciously held me up ever since to preach among you the unsearchable riches of Christ.' To a stranger it would appear, from this sentence, that he had from his earliest ministry preached among them, in all the freeness and fulness of the gospel, the unsearchable riches of Christ. But he must not be so understood. It is qualified by this expression, *under one form or other.* He refers chiefly to the proclamation which he was then enabled to make, at the first opening of his embassy, which, if not elucidated with the perspicuity of a veteran, was declared with the faithfulness of a good soldier, as far as he had been then taught. From the earliest period of his ministry he might have preached

[a] Vol. IV. page 178.

some of the leading doctrines of our faith; but he knew nothing savingly of these grand truths of the gospel which give offence to the carnal mind; and had he known and declared them fully, it is very probable he had never been vicar of Charles. I mean, our election of God before time was, without reference to works; our new birth in time, in consequence of this election, and our inseparable union with Christ by virtue of our new birth; with all the other branches of doctrine which spring from these roots. I have heard him say, that at eight-and-twenty years of age, he knew no more of these great and mysterious truths, as to any personal application, than the moles and the bats; yet still there was in him an evident desire to benefit his fellow creatures, blended with some indistinct views of the gospel of Christ.

From the college books, we find him again at Oxford during the Easter-term, 1779, some time after he had been ordained deacon; and it appears, from his letter of orders, that he was ordained priest, by the right reverend Dr. Ross, at the Palace Chapel, Exeter, on the Lord's day, May 30, 1779, to the curacy of Charles; and he is therein described as now or late of Magdalen Hall, Oxford. He took his name from the college books, October 27, 1780. Of this Hall was also the celebrated William Tyndale, who was a great promoter of the Reformation, and the first translator of the new testament into English. He suffered martyrdom in the year 1536. How opportunely does the Lord raise up great and useful men to carry on his own purposes of grace in the church of Christ.

The first publication of the curate of Charles, and indeed the only publication whilst he continued curate, was a Sermon, preached at Roborough Down, near Plymouth, before the North Battalion of Gloucestershire Militia, there encamped, on Sunday, Aug. 5, 1781, which he entitled, 'A Devout Soldier,' which title comprises the whole of his text, taken from Acts x. 7. This sermon was no doubt a specimen of his preaching at that period — the language classically

chaste, elegant, and impressive; but it is defective in scriptural doctrine, and barren of gospel elucidations. The name of his all-glorious CHRIST, as he was wont, in his later days, most emphatically to call Him, "whose name is above every name," is not once mentioned. The Great Sovereign of the universe, the Supreme Disposer of all events, the Divine Being, and God Almighty, which are the common epithets or periphrases used in refined divinity, for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, are the terms adopted in this sermon, save at the close, where he exhorts the Devout Soldier 'to contemplate the glories of that future region of the blessed, and conceive, if possible, the happiness that will expand his breast, when invited to make one of that celestial multitude, in those emphatic words of divine approbation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of *thy Lord*."'

To meet some disingenuous remarks made by the Rev. R. Polwhele, in reference to this sermon, whilst animadverting on the Doctor's more enlarged views of gospel truth, which Mr. Polwhele seemed to think incompatible with either uniformity or consistency, the Doctor observes,[a] 'In the midst of all your reproaches, I have to thank you, Sir, for reminding me of what my forgetful heart is but too apt to lose sight of; I mean, my unspeakable obligations to God for his gracious instructions, during a period of nearly twenty years, since I published my little work 'The Devout Soldier.' When I look back and consider, how divine grace has brought me on my way, I take shame in the reflection, how little my improvements have been under so many and long opportunities. It appears, by what you (Mr. P.) say, that it is a subject of joy to your heart that you have felt no change; for you tell me, that 'your religious sentiments have been uniform and consistent.' My rejoicing, on the contrary, is, that in my instance the promise is fulfilled, "The Lord hath brought

[a] Vol. IX. page 400.

the blind by a way that they knew not," Isa. xlii. 16. I have no cause to blush in acknowledging, that at the time I published that sermon, my ideas of the great and essential doctrines of the gospel were faint and indistinct to what they are now. It is my mercy, however, to see, that in that very sermon, if there are no great marks of divine teachings, there are no blind and presumptuous reasonings against them.'

The influences of devotion, as his term is, seem to be the chief theme of his discourse; but he was evidently, at that period, whatever his attainments in knowledge might have been, a stranger to that renewing grace whereby a man is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. As this sermon may not have been before observed by many who may read this memoir, I hope it will be excusable if I give a short extract as a specimen of the elegance of his style and the manner of his preaching, at the earliest part of his ministry.

'Strains[a] of piety,' saith he, 'flowing from the warrior's lips are doubly animating; the bended knee or uplifted eye of the soldier is a sight, which it is impossible to behold unmoved or without admiration. Indeed, the spirit of devotion ever imparts a dignity to the mind that claims respect from all orders. To witness the prayers of saints, and to listen to the addresses of the devoted religious, in sacred haunts of consecrated worship, where the voice of adoration is only heard, is an awakener of tender emotions, exciting a pleasing sensibility in our powers wholly irresistible; but when, from the din of war or silent camp, the soldier's incense ascends in pious fervours to heaven; when, in the field of battle, we see the hero animated with the strength of a devout heart, and looking up with reverence and submission to the Great Disposer of events, and no less, in the peaceful retreat of the tent, pouring forth, before the God of Hosts, the same effusions of his breast in gratitude and praise, this

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[a] Vol. IX. page 691.

surely transcends the utmost picture our ideas can form, calls up the passions with more abundant force, and carries our conceptions to the highest pitch of admiration and applause. Religion herself, in fact, seems to feel the superior energy of such oblations.'

The personification of religion and devotion in pulpit discourses, whose purpose should be to lead the mind to a real and not to an imaginary agency, in the great work of sanctification, carried on in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is, in my view, however common the practice, reprehensible. Every principle in true religion, every spring of sacred devotion in the soul, originates in his presence there. Even the term, grace, when personified, has a tendency to draw the thoughts from the only Communicator of divine influence, the third Person of the glorious Trinity. There is no religion, no devotion, no influential grace, but what he bestows, inspires, or quickens. But this our camp preacher, however fertile his imagination, or impressive his eloquence, however extensive his reading, or great his literary acquisitions, had yet to learn. The term, influence, appeared familiar, but as yet he knew not what it is to have fellowship with Him, who is the well-spring of all vital influence holy and divine.

Whether in the martial camp, or in the peaceful saloon, his mind was always awake to the powers of music. And his natural taste and love for this science ofttimes induced him, at this period of his life, to join the parties of the gay and thoughtless, where he was literally the fiddle of the company; for as an amateur of the violin, his proficiency is not yet forgotten. The vivacity of his wit, the cheerfulness of his disposition, and the courtesy of his manners, caused him to be much in request. But even an ardent attachment to music is frequently the source of much dissipation. Though it be only what is called sacred, yet if the heart be not in accord, it is *vox et præterea nihil.* Music is only the handmaid of devotion, but if ever substituted for it, it becomes

meretricious, and no longer harmless. His love for the harmonic science induced him to use his exertions to have a new set of bells for the parish church of Charles, which were put up in the year 1782. But however melodious the music of their merry peal, never was sweeter music heard within those walls, than the melodious notes of the gospel, which, in some subsequent years, fell from his lips, breathed in strains of richest eloquence purely natural (that is, inartificial and unstudied) and seldom rivalled. There was music in his very cadences; but, in the transcendent elevation of his subject, sometimes rapture.

But to return to our narrative. In the year 1784, the Rev. John Bedford, who had been vicar of Charles five-and-twenty years, was removed by death; and this year became an eventful one to him whose memorial I write. 'It is,' saith he, in one of his tracts, 'among the highest duties of life to watch the ebbings and flowings of God's goodness, in the tide of our own history.' He had been six years and a half curate of Charles, with no very large income and a growing family. As a man of unsullied integrity and superior talents, he had a claim on the honourable considerations of the corporation of Plymouth, in whose patronage was the presentation of the living. Another candidate was found in the lecturer of St. Andrew's in the same borough. His friends were canvassed, among whom was his former master, who, at this critical period, was not only a member of the corporation, but mayor of the borough, and took an active part in his behalf. Though there was another candidate, so great was the majority in his favour, that on the day of election there was but one dissentient voice. His presentation to the vicarage of Charles, by the mayor and commonalty of the borough of Plymouth, received the bishop's seal, on the 20th of May, 1784. It is lamentable, that this corporation should of late years have so far overlooked the duty, which they owed to the morals of this borough, as to set at sale the patronage of this living, and

with the money thus obtained to erect a theatre. ‘ One theatre,’ says archbishop Tillotson, to whose popular divinity every member of the corporation would perhaps pay some deference, ‘ ruins more souls, than fifty churches can save.’ It is true, that a tremendous responsibility hangs over the heads of patrons of livings; but what shall we say of professedly christian bodies corporate becoming the proprietors and patrons of theatres? The world wants amusements, but what will be the result of these amusements on a dying-bed, never enters their thoughts.

In the year ensuing to his nomination, our new vicar was called upon to preach a sermon before the bishop of the diocese, at his triennial visitation, which took place in the parish church of St. Andrew, Plymouth, on the 6th of August, 1785. This sermon (from 2 Cor. vi. 4, “ In all things approving yourselves as ministers of God,”) was also published, in which there is evidently a more enlarged view of gospel truths, a deeper insight into spiritual things, and a higher standard of divinity, that we cannot but admire the progress he was making in divine knowledge. I know not, whether this sermon received any subsequent revision, as I am not in possession of the first edition; but the whole of it evidences a growing acquaintance with the word of God, and a stronger conviction of its importance. In the Devout Soldier, the quotations from scripture are very short and few; but in this visitation sermon, the select portions are not only numerous, but well applied, and the attention is drawn to some important doctrines. ‘ When our congregation,’ saith he, ‘ is composed, for the most part, of men of plain understanding, who have to learn what are the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, the plainest language should be adopted to the plainest truths of scripture; I mean those concerning our fallen state, and our recovery by the Lord Jesus, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost. When we address ourselves to others of more refined minds, who are advanced in the path of grace, we may then, with

greater propriety, dwell on the more advanced doctrines, which trace that recovery up to its glorious source in the covenant of redemption, between the Persons of the Godhead, before the foundation of the world."[a]

Whether this section, or any part of it, was added or not in any subsequent revision of his works, the sermon evidently demonstrates a more advanced acquaintance with the doctrines of grace; and as his mind opened to the contemplation of these subjects, he felt more concerned for the spiritual interests of his parishioners. About this time, sunday-schools became more generally patronized and promoted. He published a sermon, in recommendation of these institutions, in the month of February, 1789, in which we may trace a growing love for immortal souls.

I know not, nor have I, from enquiry, been able to ascertain, at what period he became freed from the delusive doctrine of man's own free-will ability of coming to God, or of obtaining an interest in the election of grace; but it appears, from the letters[b] of that veteran champion of divine truth, the Rev. William Romaine, that he was at Plymouth in the month of August, 1789; and it is well remembered, that our generous vicar, who had at some time previously invited the Rev. John Wesley to his table, with the same liberality admitted the Rev. William Romaine to his pulpit. I have heard from some quarter, at a distance too remote to recollect my authority, that Mr. Romaine preached in the morning in his usual manner, on the depth of human depravity and the sovereignty of divine grace, and that our worthy vicar, in the afternoon, made some attempts to controvert or qualify the bold assertions or unguarded expressions which the morning preacher had advanced. How different were his feelings, when some years after (1803) he first entered the pulpit of

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[a] Vol. II. page 179.

[b] See Romaine's Works, Vol. VII. page 265, printed for Chapman, Fleet Street, 1796.

St. Anne's, Blackfriars, London. 'I found my mind,' saith he, 'impressed with a more than ordinary solemnity, when I recollected the venerable character of that faithful servant of God, who had so often occupied it; when I called to mind the labours of so great a man in this place; and when I considered this very pulpit, in which I now stand, is the highly honoured spot, on which dear Mr. Romaine stood, who is now with Jesus; a certain undescribable emotion passed over me, and induced sensations I had never before experienced.'[a] And well he might, if he associated with these ideas, the recollection of his former imperfect apprehension of the truth.

In his Zion's Pilgrim, he makes mention of a traveller, with whom he had an interview, at a time when he was seeking to know more of the way of truth, which traveller is represented as entering into conversation with him on the depravity of man, and as introducing him to a prayer-meeting, and as reading a sermon to him, on "The sure mercies of David," Isa. lv. 3. 'One branch of this subject,' saith he, 'particularly arrested my attention, to which, on account of my imperfect conceptions of it, I ventured to communicate to my friend my objection.' Some have supposed, that this traveller is not an allegorical, but a real character, and that it is none other than the Rev. Mr. Romaine; others have considered the Rev. Mr. Goode, who succeeded Mr. Romaine in the rectory of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, to be the intended traveller, who also visited Plymouth some time after, and preached for him, and with whom our Zion's Pilgrim formed an intimate friendship. I regret, that in conversation with our venerable friend, I never thought of making the inquiry—not that I mean to imply, that he received his knowledge merely of man, but an Apollos was indebted to Aquilla and Priscilla, "for expounding unto him the word of God more perfectly," Acts xviii. 26. Neither of the ministers above-

[a] Vol. VII. page 666.

mentioned were ashamed to avow, that man's salvation was wholly of God's sovereignty, in the election of grace, even before the foundation of the world; and that they were chosen to be holy and blameless before him in love: and not because the Lord foresaw that from their own free-will ability they would render themselves worthy of his approbation and choice; for then salvation would be no more of grace, but of works, which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine, Rom. xi. 6.

There was a time, when the vicar of Charles did not cordially receive the doctrine, that maintains the freeness and sovereignty of God's electing love. In his little work, entitled, 'Visits to and from Jesus,' after discussing this subject, he reverts to his former error:—'But here I pause,' saith he, 'indeed I can go no further, until I have first fallen down to the dust of the earth, before the Sovereign Majesty of my God, under the deepest sense of self-abasement and abhorrence! How long and how daringly violent did I myself oppose this glorious truth, which now, through thy grace subduing my rebellion, and teaching my soul its blessedness, is become my greatest joy and delight. Lord! thou knowest well, with what bitterness of a fallen nature, I contended against the sovereignty of thy grace, in thy free-will election; while in the very moment audaciously insisting upon my own power in a free-will ability of serving thee! Oh, what mercy hath been shewn me on the recovery of my soul from a delusion so awful!'[a]

It must have been about this time, that he began to withdraw from worldly society. From his natural vivacity, and enlivening conversation, his company was, as I before observed, much sought. Even to old age, he retained the same spirit of wit and humour, and was a most entertaining as well as instructive companion. If any thing were spoken contrary to sound speech or sound divinity, it never or

[a] Vol. VII. page 262.

seldom escaped his animadversion; but with the reproof, which corrected the error, there was commonly blended the smile of affection. In addition to the love of music, which led him into company, he was naturally sociable, and was ever welcome to a large circle of friends; but when his mind became more deeply sensible of the value of time, and of the inconsistency of a professed minister of Christ spending his evenings at the chess-board, or card-table, he would rather relinquish their friendship than join in their amusements. This brought upon him their displeasure. A Portuguese lady, at whose house he was wont often to resort to spend his evenings in this manner, and from whom he was led to expect some considerable legacy, when she found that he would no longer indulge in these pursuits, sent for him, and by way of shewing him that he had no longer any interest in her bequests, asked him when it would be agreeable to him to witness her will? 'Now, or when you please,' said her courteous visitor; for he well knew what she hereby intended; for whoever becomes a witness to a will, doth thereby, as the reader may well know, exclude himself from any and every interest he might otherwise have therein. This cross, among many others, he was willing to bear for the Lord and his truth's sake.

His evenings were now more frequently spent in the chamber of the sick, the aged, or paralytic, among the humblest of his flock, "both hearing them and asking them questions." But this also was turned to his reproach,[a] 'that a man of his education and ability should associate with such low and ignorant persons as commonly attended prayer-meetings;' without taking into their calculations how much these meetings for social prayer were blessed of God to his people. Here he could speak more familiarly on the things of the kingdom; here the poor and the diffident could always find access to his person; here they could freely unbosom

[a] Vol. III. page 106.

their sorrows and fears; here he became more intimately acquainted with the state of their minds. Weekly meetings for social prayer were held at Mary Le Fortune's, the poor woman whose obituary you will find in the last volume of his works, extracted from a religious periodical publication, to which he sent it. Here to relax from laborious duties, and to unbend his mind from severer studies, he would oft-times retreat, from the noise and bustle of the great world without, to unite in prayer and praise, and to expound the scripture to a few of the faithful followers of his Lord and Master. Also at the lowly abode of Jonas Eathorn, the paralytic mentioned in his Zion's Pilgrim. Jonas Eathorn was of the humble business of a hair-dresser, and when the Lord was pleased to convince him of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the absolute necessity of a change of heart, he felt the obligation of relinquishing his usual practice of following his business on the Lord's day. This determination caused him to lose many of his customers; but he persevered in his good purpose, until it pleased the Lord to confine him by sickness to his chamber. From a paralytic seizure, he was confined to his bed *six-and-twenty* years. Although his resolution to keep the sabbath sacred exposed him to many difficulties, and he was so many years the Lord's prisoner, yet he was never known to want. Oft have I heard him speak of his rich Almighty Banker, and his promissory notes. 'Here, Sir,' said he, clapping his hand on his bible, 'here is my check-book, and when I want, I draw upon him, by prayer and precious faith, and thus he "supplies all my need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ," Phil. iv. 19.

In the chamber of this afflicted yet faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus, have I ofttimes met our venerable friend, and witnessed the affectionate condescension of the scholar and divine in this humble circle. The social meeting began their devotions about seven o'clock in the evening, by singing a hymn and with prayer. The hymn-book was given to some aged pilgrim or faithful servant of the Lord to select his own

spiritual song, which was generally adapted to his own feelings for the time; then followed the introductory prayer, which was commonly offered up with so much ardency of affection, with such an evident singleness of aim, and in so rich an adaptation of scriptural language, that I have felt it a holy luxury to be there. Our reverend pastor then expounded the word of God, or after a few spiritual observations, questioned those present on the ground of their faith, on the hope of their calling, on the evidences of their renewed life, and such were the answers given, and such the consolations administered in solving knotty difficulties, and in throwing light on doubtful cases, under the warrant of scripture and the sealing of the Spirit, that it has appeared to me a little university of experimental divinity. And, although the experience of several descriptions of character narrated in his Zion's Pilgrim, may appear to a stranger to be the paintings of his own imagination, to give a varied colouring to his little volume, yet have I heard in that circle, the same mournful complaints of an evil heart of unbelief, or of the hidings of God's countenance, or of the various exercises of doubt and fear, with which their faith had been tried, or confidence shaken, as are therein described. Himself when there always concluded with prayer, which was poured forth in such a flow of vivid language, so rich in christian experience, so strong in special pleadings, and accompanied with such an unction of the Spirit, that the spiritual mind, under kindred influence, could feel itself melt with his fervour, and mingle in the tide of his devotion.

The Lord was pleased to call me early in life to the knowledge of the truth, and I hope to the enjoyment of it, under his ministry: and, in these humble circles did I first learn, under the Almighty Armourer of his church militant, to gird on the harness for spiritual conflicts; here did I first join in communion with the people of God; here did I first learn to distinguish between a covenant of works and a

covenant of grace; here oft did new truths, at least new to me, flash upon my mind "to give me the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. But, although in grace I have grown, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, yet I dare not consider myself more the object of divine favour now than I was then, or than I was when chosen in Christ before the world began. I still carry about with me a body of sin and death, a vile body, a corrupt body, and expect it not to be otherwise till it be renewed from the grave.

But to proceed.—In the parish of Charles there is an ancient meeting-house, which is generally considered a Presbyterian place of worship, where Arian, if not Socinian, doctrines were, and I believe still are, preached. Whether built for some puritan or ejected minister, I know not, but it is commonly believed, that it was built and endowed by men, whose views of divine things were very different from their sentiments into whose hands it has since fallen. This shews the necessity of having in the deeds, or in some formulary, articles of appeal against any preacher, who may occupy a place of worship, and there disseminate doctrines dissimilar to the great truths, for the preaching of which it was first intended. The provision made by the Church of England in this particular, evinces the wisdom of the founders, though their precaution be too often superseded.

At this meeting-house, there was, about the year 1790, a preacher of some ability, very industrious in promulgating his Socinian sentiments. The vicar of Charles, therefore, thought it his duty 'to prevent the minds of his congregation in particular, or parishioners in general, from being led away from what he, on sound argument, conceived to be the pure faith of the gospel, by the revival of an opinion long since exploded or discountenanced in that town; but, which seemed to be mingling with the fashionable doctrines of the times. These discourses he would have confined to his own pulpit, but when he found the sincerity of the established

clergy called in question, and it was confidently said, that but few of them believed the doctrines he professed, he concluded, that he ought not to confine his sentiments within the narrow limits of his own parish, but declare himself in a more public way, to be one of those *supposed* few, whose professions and convictions are happily blended.'[a]

With this apology expressed in the preface, his volume of Sermons on the Divinity of Christ were sent to the press, at the close of the year 1790. A volume, which requires no eulogy from me to recommend it; its praise is in the churches. This volume procured for him the diploma of doctor in divinity, from the University of Edinburgh. The diploma bears date, July 5, 1792, and is signed by one-and-twenty leading members of that learned body; among whom was, Doctor William Robertson, late principal of that University, and historiographer to his Majesty George III. for Scotland, the historian of Charles V. of Germany, and author of other learned works; also, the Rev. Hugh Blair, professor of rhetoric and belles lettres in the said University, celebrated for his lectures in rhetoric, and sermons on various subjects. The elegancy of our author's diction, the courtesy of his appeals, the cogency of his arguments, and the lucid arrangement of the whole, gained the work many admirers; and not a few acknowledged their conviction of the truth. In the hope that the same result may follow, under divine blessing, to some honest enquirer, still wavering upon decision, I cannot resist quoting a few striking remarks in the margin of the new edition of the work, which, after six-and-thirty years, has had its last revision from the pen of the author. 'Let the man,'[b] saith he, 'who hath not yet received sufficient evidences to satisfy his understanding of the divinity of Christ, ask himself this single question, whether it be possible to suppose, that a Being can be distinguished by such incommunicable properties, to be

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[a] Vol. I. page 6.

[b] Vol. I. page 122.

present at all times, and in all places, upholding all things by the word of his power; his *eye* unremittingly directed to take in, with one comprehensive glance, every object, both in heaven and in earth; his *ear* open to the numberless cries of all creatures; his *arm* stretched forth to support, restrain, protect, punish, and reward the various subjects of his providence; and all this to millions and millions of creatures in one and the same moment; and yet all the while be a created being, or the delegated creature of another? Oh! the absurdity of modern infidelity! What contradictions will it not reconcile rather than bow down to the truth.' The assertion of the apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13, carries with it, in my mind, a sufficient argument for the divinity of Christ.

This volume of sermons brought from Mr. Porter, who then officiated at the same meeting-house, a volume of two hundred pages in *Defence of Unitarianism*, professedly to animadvert on the Doctor's views of the deity of the Lord Jesus. In this defence, in coasting along in pursuit of arguments to silence his opponent, Mr. Porter, in behalf of himself, and those embarked in the same cause, thus writes, 'That though we allow the different writers of the new testament to have written the books attributed to them, we are not of an opinion that they were under a plenary inspiration at the time they wrote them.'

In a letter to Mr. Porter, published soon after, in reply to this intended defence of what he is pleased to call Unitarianism, the Doctor disclaims his intention of going over the beaten ground of controversy in confirmation of the Godhead of our blessed Lord, but undertakes to rebut the sentiment set forth in the above quotation. 'Was it not,' saith he, 'enough to deny the divinity of the great Saviour of the world, but you must also deny the *full* inspiration of God's most holy word?' But, as the Doctor argues, 'if we are not to believe the full inspiration of scripture, a partial inspiration is no better than none at all, for mankind would be as

much embarrassed to know what was inspired or what was not, 'as they would be to collect a religion for themselves.' The injunction of the Lord, not to add thereto or to take therefrom, is in proof of a plenary inspiration of his word. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," 1 Cor. xiv. 37. And if this may be said to refer only to the old testament, the apostle says, 1 Cor. ii. 13, "We speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." So also, 1 Thess. ii. 13, "When ye received," saith he, "the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man; but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." After going through a large body of evidence, with which the controversy is supported, he takes leave of his opponent, assuring him, that he had not the vanity to suppose, that any thing which he had said would operate to the emancipating of his mind from the erroneous doctrines he professed. 'I know,' saith he, 'that this is not in the power of man—it belongs to a higher power—to Him, with all possible humility, is the whole referred.'[a]

A pretended answer was afterwards published by Mr. Porter, in another letter, in which he maintains the same error. 'Neither Esdras,' saith he, 'nor Luke were prophets, but grave and prudent men, who neither wished to deceive nor would suffer themselves to be deceived. Did Luke say, the word of the Lord came to Luke; and the Lord said to him, write, as the prophets were accustomed to say?'—'The prophets were influenced in a very different manner from what Luke was, whose good intentions, however, may be ascribed to the holy spirit.' I quote his own words from the sixth page, and retain the small initial letters to the name of the Third Person of the all-glorious Trinity. Though he would detract attention, by substituting small for capital letters, yet is he entangled in his argument, and unwarily admits the

[a] Vol. IX. page 269.

personality of the Holy Ghost; for how could it be ascribed to him, if he were not an agent or person? Luke is declared, by St. Paul, to be a fellow-labourer with him; Philem. xxiv. and of his fellow-labourers, he assures the Corinthians from Philippi, where Luke was with him, Acts xx. 6. "*We* speak not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii. 13. But from whom doth Luke say he had a perfect understanding in all things? ανωθεν, "from above." It is improperly translated, "from the very first," Luke i. 3. To this letter, however, the Doctor made no reply; for it would have tended to multiply and encourage the sale of his opponent's heresies.

An observation made by one of the reviewers of this controversy is worth recording.[a] 'It has been remarked by pious naturalists, as a peculiar instance of the goodness of providence, that, in places where poisonous herbs are produced, antidotes are generally to be found near at hand. This is the case in the subject before us. Plymouth, which has lately brought forth the noxious weeds of error, happily furnishes the sovereign antidote of divine truth to counteract its baneful influence. While a Porter disseminates the pernicious dogmas of socinianism and infidelity, a HAWKER opposes to him, and with success, the wholesome doctrines of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ.'

From the kind reception, which was given by the public to his volume of Sermons, on the Godhead of Christ, and from a desire of being further useful in the same glorious cause, he was induced, early in the year 1794, to send to the press another volume of Sermons, on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost. Here is indeed a volume of evidences on these grand truths; but his arguments, grounded on Mark iii. 28, 29. wherein our blessed Lord is speaking of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, are much to the purpose, strong, conclusive, unanswerable. They may

[a] Evan. Mag. for 1793, page 129.

be thus briefly compressed:—If the Holy Ghost be not a person, how can we sin against him? And if he be not God, how can that sin be blasphemy? And if he be not a distinct person from the Father, how can that sin be unpardonable? "For all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme. But he, that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." In a note on the introductory discourse, are some remarks on the improper application of the word *enthusiast*, which he quotes, as if a transcript of his own feelings on the subject. 'The man, whose fire is kindled from the rhetoric of Tully, who travels over high mountains to kiss the dear ground that Marcus Tullius Cicero walked upon, whose soul would be so animated as to be ready to burst, if he could see the rostrum from whence Cicero poured forth his thunder of eloquence; this man shall be esteemed a being of superior order, and as one who possesses a larger soul than the common horde of men; but he, who in the contemplation of that love of God that passeth knowledge, feels an animation of the purest nature, to whose awakened mind the recollection of his Redeemer's sufferings shall call tears from his eyes, and heave the sigh of sorrow in his heart, this man is to be branded with the name of *enthusiast*, and classed among the most senseless of men — Alas! what a proof of human depravity. If the having a more awakened attachment than others towards the Divine Being, who, strictly speaking, is the only object in the universe deserving the affections of his creatures; and if the being animated with this divine love, manifesting itself in all the instances of duty, (which is the only infallible evidence of its reality); if these things constitute an enthusiast, would to God that I were the greatest enthusiast alive!'[a] This holy breathing of his soul appears, in this good man's life, to have been in reality answered; for

[a] Vol. I. page 212.

where is there one in all the wider circle of the church of Christ, or in all the minor circles of our friendship, that was more animated with this divine love, manifesting itself in all the instances of duty? Even his enemies declare, that they have nothing in his moral character wherewith to accuse him. He stood nobly forth in defence of the great truths of the gospel, and therefore they contended with him.

In the same year, in which his Sermons on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost were published, he also sent from the press, An Appeal to the People of England on the Subject of the French Revolution.—Of which he says: 'When I wrote it, I sent it forth into the world anonymously, that neither the insignificance of the author on the one hand, nor his particular situation as a minister of the establishment on the other, might impede its utility.'[a] In admonishing his countrymen against a desire of change, he states: 'That if they really understood what were the most prominent features of a republic, tending to promote a people's happiness, they would have known, that in the present limited monarchy of this kingdom, they really have what they seem to covet. The British constitution is formed on that happy model, that if,' continues he, 'I may be allowed the expression, it is a monarchy and a republic consolidated; for it unites with the vigour of the one, the freedom of the other, and, without any infraction upon the principles of either, supports both.'[b] He compares it to 'a fine old painting, the production of the first master of the art, which may have suffered from the ravages of time, and its beauties may be somewhat defaced; yet no man surely,' saith he, 'would entrust so invaluable a piece to every pretender of the brush, or suffer the injuries it hath sustained to be mended by the course daubers of the day. Nay, the very dust which hath fallen upon it, the real connoisseur would not permit to be wiped off, but with the most gentle and delicate hand. And

[a] Vol. I. page 367. [b] Vol. IX. page 581.

yet there are some of my countrymen, who, though allowing the English form of government to be like this painting, the finest production of human art, uniting all the collected wisdom of our ancestors in the contrivance, are, nevertheless, so infatuated, as to be ready to deliver it up to the correction of a rabble, and seem to be perfectly unapprehensive of the consequences.'[a]

In compiling the memoirs of any author, who may have published any thing on the subject of politics, I should deem myself deficient as a biographer, if I did not give the outlines of his political views; the quotations made are an epitome of his sentiments. The author of this Appeal has been charged with inconsistency, for using in the pulpit this apothegm, *the bible is my politics*, whilst he published anonymously a pamphlet on the French revolution. But what are the politics of the bible, save that which is embodied in the text which he chose, on another occasion, when he preached before the Lodge of Unity, December 27, 1792, on the invaluable blessings of our religious and civil government? "My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change," Prov. xxiv. 21. And what tendency has his Appeal to the People of England but to enforce the same doctrine? I see not the shadow of an inconsistency in all this. At the first view, it appears surprizing, that a man of such distinguished talents and useful labours, did not receive some mark of public acknowledgment for his zeal and industry, besides a mere diploma. Many for works of little importance in their nature, less talented in their execution, and the least efficient in their influence on the morals of the people, have been honoured with dignified preferments. But the Vicar of Charles knew not how to stoop to mean compliances; he sought not his own glory, and was now ranked among those, who were particularly designated as evangelical preachers, which is too frequently an impediment in the way to ecclesiastical

[a] Vol. IX. page 580.

preferment. Surely this is a little of the dust which wants to be wiped off the good old picture. But the truth of God shall remain unalterable—the world loveth its own.

Although he had this year, 1794, presented to the church of Christ a volume of Sermons on the most interesting subjects, and to the people of England an Appeal against any political revolution, to be attempted by tumult and clamour; yet he was not unmindful of the miseries of the poor. In the close of this year, he sent to the press his *Misericordia*, or Compassion to the Sorrows of the Heart; intended originally for an institution of that name, which he, about this time, established at Plymouth, and which still continues to pour its stream of active benevolence, where misery and want reside. But this useful little work was afterwards published, as the title-page expresses it, 'for the use of the sick and sorrowful of every description, and forming a suitable companion for every sick-room.' The Misericordia, from which this little work borrowed its name, is a charitable institution, for the express purpose of relieving the wants of the forlorn and distressed *stranger*. In every large town there may be found numbers of this description, and not merely among such as come forward to public notice, by knocking at the door to ask alms; but much more so, in those retired haunts, where modest poverty too often secretes itself from observation. 'In such abodes of human woe,' as testifies our worthy friend, 'are sometimes discoverable beings of more real wretchedness than the imagination can well conceive; at once contending, amidst all the pressing necessities of nature, accompanied very often with sickness and pain, against every sorrow to which the heart of man is accessible; without a friend to console, and not unfrequently without all sense of religion to soften the severity of the gloom around. The first design of this institution is directed to supply the wants of the body—the next is to the concerns of the soul. Not that the wants of the body have the prior claim; but because, when its wants are supplied, the mind is left to more freedom, and

is better disposed also, it is presumed, to attend to *the one thing needful.*'[a]

In the preface of a subsequent edition of this little work, he thus writes: 'About this time, I was called upon daily to perform the last office in burying the dead, chiefly of soldiers, and to such numbers, that my mind was more than ordinarily arrested to enquire into the cause of such great mortality. I found, that several transports, laden with troops for foreign service, had put into Catwater (the name of an inlet of the sea at Plymouth) for distress of weather; and a pestilential fever breaking out among the soldiery, they were constrained to bring them ashore; and a large barn afterwards, and therefrom called the Friary *Hospital*, in the parish of Charles, received them. Within the space of *three months*, more than *a thousand died:* and the wives and children of many of them took refuge in garrets and cellars in the town. Their distresses excited no small consideration. I availed myself of this general feeling, and instituted this charity, which I am pleased to say,' continues he, 'hath been kept up by annual subscription to this hour, now near *thirty years;* and I hope, through the divine blessing, will long continue amidst the other charities of Plymouth.'[b]

Mr. Thomas Watts Oborne, who was more than thirty-three years clerk of the parish of Charles, and voluntarily resigned his office soon after his beloved pastor's death, gives me the following information: 'That the dead soldiers were carried in cart-loads to the burial ground, in St. Andrew's parish, and buried in large trenches dug for that purpose.' He also states, that three hundred and twelve inhabitants died of the same contagion. What an awful instance of the dreadful ravages of sin—sin slew all these, and will soon open the grave for all living. Reader, art thou anticipating thy release with holy joy? or art thou afraid to die, because thou art too conscious that thy heart was never changed? Pause

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[a] Vol. II. page 537.

[b] Vol. II. page 535.

over the thought—the LORD alone can brighten up thy prospects of eternity.

In the last edition of this little work, in an appendix to the preface, dated January 11, 1827, the venerable author begs permission to relate an anecdote of no small feeling. 'During the continuance of the soldiers, which survived the pestilence at Friary Hospital, one of them, by name Patrick O'Connor, had sold (perhaps to provide for some pressing occasion) a book of his; and it was lying on an old bookstall, which lay in my way, when going to the burying ground. On the back of the title-page, the poor man had written his name, and the state of his then misery, thus: 'Patrick O'Connor, once of the famous city of Limerick, in the county of Kilkenny, in the kingdom of Ireland; but now dying of a broken heart, in Friar's Hospital, Plymouth.'

Amidst his earnest concern to be useful to the church of Christ, in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and his pastoral solicitude to bring his parishioners practically acquainted with prayer; amidst too, his patriotic zeal for his country, and philanthropic commiseration for the forlorn and distressed stranger, he was not unmindful of his own household. From their tenderest infancy, never could a father shew more devoted affection or more unwearied carefulness over this endearing part of his charge. Even when his views of divine things were very indistinct, and he knew less of the value of an immortal soul, he felt the tenderest solicitude for their welfare. But when clearer light beamed upon his mind, all his sensibilities were awakened, not only to a concern for his own, but for their salvation. His '*Paraclesis*, or Consolations in a Dying Hour, from a review of the evidences of a renewed life, in a series of letters to his children,' will remain a monument of his parental affection. In his first letter, he thus writes: 'From the first moment it pleased the providence of God to call me to the duties and anxieties of a father, I have felt the tender charities of such a relationship, and the resistless claims have

but increased upon me with increasing years. The waking seasons of earliest life, while engaged in the puerile pursuits of unconscious childhood, have not unfrequently called forth the distressing apprehension of your safety ; and often, when looking upon you in the defenceless state of your sleeping hours, have I hung over you with an affection not less enamoured (though arising from a different stream of love), than what the poet represents our first father to have felt for the tender object of his regard—and beheld

> " Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
> Shot forth peculiar graces."—MILTON, Book V.

' While in the view,' continues he, ' and the imagination contemplating the perilous path, to which your riper years, if spared, would necessarily be exposed, I have felt the rising sigh bursting involuntarily from my heart, accompanied with a prayer, not unlike the patriarch's of old, " O that Ishmael might live before thee !" Gen. xvii. 18. The parent's heart will know of what I speak, and will enter with me into a full participation of these exquisitely tender, but altogether indescribable feelings, which are peculiarly his own. To all others, I am well aware, they are among the joys and sorrows, with which a stranger cannot intermeddle.

' Through the gracious benignity of an indulgent providence, I have lived to see you rising up into life to act for yourselves, and one by one departing into the world, like the full-fledged offspring of the nest, taking wing in different directions, remote perhaps from me and from each other. To send after you the father's blessing, and to follow your flight through the world with the father's prayer, are now all the remaining duties I can perform for you. Perhaps the foolish fondness of the father, in looking back on the rugged path of life, which he himself hath long and sometimes painfully trodden, would send forth the wish, that the way be softened and rendered less trying to his children ; but I suppress the ill-judged desire. There is but one unerring Judge of what is right. My prayers are, that as the Lord shall open the

several successive pages of the book of life before you, the impressions of his Holy Spirit may be read in every line; and, whether, on the whole, the chapters in your history shall be most prosperous or afflictive, the life itself may be a life of grace here, leading to an endless volume of eternal glory hereafter.'[a]

Although a sweetly flowing strain of eloquence runs through the whole of this quotation, yet, I fear, it has lost something of its elegancy, from being presented in an abridged form. In all this, how richly is the warm glow of parental affection blended with the softened temperament of mature wisdom. After having, in his own peculiar style, familiar yet rich, copious yet chaste, descanted largely on the evidences of a renewed life, which demonstrates his knowledge, if not the enjoyment of them, he closes the work with a touching picture of the father of a family, who knew himself to be but a steward in his master's house, retiring to his chamber, and taking care, that his children be given every necessary instruction for a comfortable night's rest before his master calls. 'And now,' saith he, 'let me only refresh your memory once again with the recollection, that what is here offered is the last advice of a father, in the night of death, before he goes hence to be no more seen. I have considered myself indeed all along as rising with thankfulness from the supper of life, and waiting, with my lighted taper in my hand, for the Master's call to rest; but knowing your hour of sleep to be approaching, I have paused before I bid you, farewell, to tell you of the softest chambers of repose, to them who sleep in Jesus. My latest breath will be a prayer to God, that he may give you grace to live in the possession of those evidences of the renewed life, that you may die in full assurance of glory—Farewell.'[b]

On the recurring birth-days of each of his children, it was his custom, as long as the Lord permitted him to sojourn

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[a] Vol. III. page 496, 497. [b] Vol. III. page 561.

among them, to write a letter of parental greeting; containing some memento of the Lord's goodness and mercy towards both father and child. As nothing more fully developes the *private* character of any one, than documents of this nature, which were never intended to make their way beyond the drawer of the bureau of the person to whom they were written, I have prevailed with one of the family to permit me to transcribe one of those birth-day epistles to embellish these Memoirs. It was written after he had attained his seventy-first year.

'Eight o'Clock, Sept. 25, 1824.

'My dearest Mary, I greet in the Lord! I am just returned from the heavenly court, (indeed I am still there in spirit) where I have been to present in the arms of my faith my dear child to Him and His unceasing favour, from whom I first received her; leaving, at his throne, all that my poor heart could utter of supplications with thanksgiving, for all blessings spiritual, temporal, and eternal, for my dearest Mary; and that my God may supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. It was my mercy, that with the first dawn of the morning, the Lord brought to my recollection, that it was my dearest child's birth-day. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits." Then, said I, the Lord hath granted a renewed commemoration of this mercy to my dear child, and hath blessed me to see it. Marvellous grace to both, amidst the dying and the dead! After the many wintry dispensations which have passed over me, like an old desolated tree of the forest, I have still this dear branch remaining. Well may I use the language of one of old, and say as he did, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth," Isa. xxxviii. 19.

'And now, my dearest Mary, let us both seek grace from the source, where alone it is to be found, that lives, so distinguished as ours are with divine favour, may be dedicated to the divine glory; and while the Lord, in whose hand our

breath is, and whose are all our ways, preserves us on earth, our conversation may be more and more in heaven. It is possible, (yea, it is more than possible,) it is probable, when I consider, that I have already passed the scriptural marked boundary of human life, that this may be the last annual love-token, which I may be permitted to send to my child on her birth-day. Be it so. All is well. A wisdom which cannot err, and a love which cannot change, are in all dispensations towards His children. And, if in the almanack of time this is to close the congratulations of the father to his beloved child on her birth-day, this *finale* will be the more in esteem; and when the heart which dictates to the hand, and the hand which now writes, shall both cease their office, the Lord will bring to my dear child's remembrance the past, and though I then write no more, yet being dead the memento speaketh.

'There is a 25th of September to come in the annals of time, in which both the father and the child will be alike unconscious, and the place, which now knoweth them, will know them no more! Oh, the unspeakable mercy, that when unknown on earth, we shall then be well known before our God; and though we die, Jesus ever lives, and hath said, "because I live, ye shall live also." The great Lord, the almighty speaker and promiser of these divine truths, confirm them daily to our hearts, "that whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord, whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Your's, my dear child, in Him, in all the affection of the father and the friend,

'Robert Hawker.'

How sweetly doth this birth-day letter exhibit his real character! With the earliest dawn, his conversation is in heaven. His first object is to present, at his heavenly Father's court, a petition for his beloved daughter. His own heart grows warm at the tender recollections of the Lord's mercies, and whilst it dilates with gratitude, he anticipates yet

greater things to come, nor yet for him alone, but for her whom he had first received on this favoured day. Let the man who has discernment judge which was most happy in the enjoyment of a recurring birth-day, the considerate and spiritually-minded father, who began it in prayer, and suffered it not to pass without a memorial of gratitude to his God, or the wealthiest worldling that treads the earth, whoever he may be, who makes such a season an occasion of indulging in luxury and dissipation. This letter was written in his latter days, when most under the censure of men, who pretended that their principles in religion were more holy than his—examine his principles by their interesting effects in his family circle, where a man is best known, and how amiable yet dignified, how affectionate yet faithful, 'the father and the friend,' appears!

Not only from the first dawn of divine truth upon his mind, did he feel deeply concerned for the eternal salvation of his own children, but for the children of his parishioners, that they might be taught the things of God. In the year 1789, as was before observed, he preached a sermon to recommend sunday schools, and what he then recommended was carried into effect, and many a poor man's child reaped the benefit. But a commodious place for assembling them on the Lord's day was much wanted. He was, therefore, resolved to erect an edifice for that purpose, which might also accommodate a school of industry on the week-days, and be a suitable asylum for a few orphan children, under the management of a reputable mistress. The children of his sunday school were all supplied with an uniform dress; but he wished to bring them under proper instruction on the week-days, and to maintain as well as to clothe a few orphans, as far as circumstances or finances might allow thereof.

In the year 1798, the foundation-stone was laid, when he had not a single guinea subscribed towards the building. From this circumstance, he called it, *The Household of Faith*, which inscription it still bears in its front. It also

furnished the true household of faith with a suitable place to meet for social prayer. The members of the church here met on Sunday mornings at nine o'clock, and on Wednesday evenings at seven, to implore the divine blessing on their pastor and his labours; and no doubt can be entertained, that the same Lord, who disposed them to meet for prayer, and gave them a heart to pray, answered their prayers in directing their minister in the way of truth, and in replenishing his soul from the well-spring of salvation. Meetings of this description, when well conducted, cannot be otherwise than beneficial to the people among whom they are instituted, for there the Lord has promised his blessing.

The foundation-stone of this building was laid in faith, the superstructure was carried on with prayer, and "The head-stone thereof was brought forth with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it," Zech. iv. 7. The Lord, who put it into his heart to build the house, furnished the means, and it remains a monument of his faith, perseverance, and benevolence. "The liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand," Isa. xxxii. 8.

Although at his church there were two full services, and many additional duties, yet so desirous was he to set forth the Lord Jesus, and to win souls to Christ, if such were the mind of the Spirit, that he instituted a third service, and for many years went through the whole with little or no assistance. On the evenings of the Lord's day, an exposition was given on one of the lessons appointed by the rubric, and the children of the sunday-school attended to read the chapter; each child reading one or two verses, on which he commented richly and largely, not only for the instruction of the children, but for the edification of a numerous and attentive congregation, which also assembled. These expositions, no doubt, suggested to him the design of publishing his Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible, of which more hereafter. A collection was made at the close of the lectures for the benefit of the orphans, till other arrangements became

necessary. In a preface to a Selection of Hymns published by him, and sung at the evening lectures, he observes: 'That the profits arising from the sale of this publication, is the sole property of the household of faith, and will be faithfully applied to the support of the *orphans* of the Plymouth sunday-school, who, from their peculiar situation, are rendered the more immediate objects of charity, and are wholly fed, sheltered, and provided for, from no other source than the collections made for them in the boxes, and at the church doors, on lecture evenings.' But subsequently, his time was so much engaged in writing for the press, either in defence of the truth, or in promotion of the one glorious object, which every one who loves the Lord Jesus has near his heart, that he could not give all that attention to his school which the orphan department required, and his christian benevolence dictated.

In the year 1799, a most unjust and unprovoked attack was made upon him by the Rev. R. Polwhele, vicar of Manaccan, Cornwall. It appears, that the Doctor went into that county solely with the view of spending a few days with some very dear and valuable friends at Falmouth; and to fetch from thence, when those days were over, a part of his family, which had been there on a much longer visit; and, during the twelve days which were appropriated to this journey, he never officiated in any church but Falmouth, and that at the particular request of the minister of the parish, except on his return, through Truro, when by the earnest solicitations of some in that place, who had at *their* instance, and not at *his*, obtained from the clergyman the use of the pulpit for him, both at St. Clement's and Kenwyn. 'And from the politeness,' saith the Doctor, 'shewn me by both these clergymen, I had no reason to suspect, that the liberty I had obtained from this courtesy, was the effect of any indirect or improper means used to obtain the favour granted.'[a]

[a] Vol. IX. page 362.

In giving this statement, the compiler of these Memoirs wishes merely to prepare the reader's mind for the subsequent charges of Mr. Polwhele, and to shew how slight a matter may be misconstrued to the prejudice of a person, whose object may have been not only justifiable, but laudable. This journey Mr. P. denominates *a Quixotic expedition*. He charges him with having taken possession, under the imposing mask of his divinity, of the pulpits of some, who were unacquainted with his doctrines; yet, in the first page, he says, 'that the fame of the Doctor's preaching had echoed from the heights of Maker, and re-echoed from the shores of the Lizard.' As much as to say, it was known through all that county. It appears, that the Doctor had not preached at more than three churches, during the journey, and whether any indirect or improper means were taken to obtain the pulpits which were granted him, let the reader judge from the Doctor's own written testimony. But among much ribaldry and calumny thrown promiscuously on different denominations of christians, he accuses the Doctor of disseminating unscriptural doctrines, of intemperate zeal, of presumptuous itinerancy, of enthusiasm, impiety, and blasphemy. One specimen of the vicar of Manaccan's divinity will shew the reader how little he had studied his bible, or knew of "that righteousness which is unto all and upon all them that believe," Rom. iii. 22. 'If the righteousness of Christ,' saith he, 'be imputed to the faithful, so as to become, as Dr. HAWKER teacheth, their righteousness; it follows, that the faithful are equally righteous, and indeed, that the faithful are in the eye of God as righteous as Christ himself!!!' After these three notes of admiration, he exclaims: 'how impious; how blasphemous!' In reviewing the subject, how painful is the thought, that a minister of our established church, eminent for talents and classical knowledge, and for many literary labours, should be so grossly ignorant of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, as to charge a brother minister with impiety and blasphemy

for preaching the very doctrine which the apostle himself maintained, who accounted all things but dung and dross, "that he might win Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. "For he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

In repelling the charge of itinerancy, the worthy Vicar of Charles has given us some facts, which reflect lustre on his character as a parochial minister. 'With respect,' saith he, 'to the charge of itinerancy, so very opposite is this to my real character, that during the period of more than twenty years, in which I have exercised my feeble ministry in the parish of Charles, I have never been absent from it, in any one year of that time, three Sundays. Mark, I beseech you, what I say. Not *three Sundays*, in any one year; and consequently, not threescore Sundays put them all together, in the whole term of twenty years. Can Mr. Polwhele contend for greater residence? Is there a single minister in the whole diocese, nay, in the whole kingdom, unless for some particular causes, more stationary?' 'I presume, Sir,' continues the Doctor, 'you had no consciousness of this, when you came forward to tell the public, that the regular clergy, and the more sober part of their flock, are displeased with the presumptuous spirit which hath apparently prompted me to visit their parishes as a missionary of the gospel.'[a]

The Doctor doth not make this statement because he shunned the charge of itinerancy, as if a crime, but to repel what was not truth. 'You asserted,' saith he,[b] 'that my journey to the West was for the sole purpose of preaching. I contended on the contrary, (which all my friends, who knew of my journey, knew for a fact,) that this was not the object of my visit. But, if Mr. P. or any other man supposed

[a] Vol. IX. page 362.

[b] Vol. IX. page 399.

from hence, that I wished to be understood, that I would not itinerate to preach the gospel, if convenience and opportunity offered, without neglecting the duties of my own parish, this were to mistake my meaning. Gladly would I go from parish to parish, and from one county to another, 'to seek for Christ's sheep,' (as the ordination service enjoins,) that are dispersed abroad. And pardon me yet further, when I add, that of all places, did it come within my reach, Manaccan, with your permission, should be the favourite spot of my itinerancy. I should like above all things to take wing and alight on some perch near you, to warble, in the best manner I am able, the sweet notes of the gospel, though you and your friends might perhaps think, I did but *chatter as a swallow.*'[n]

At the particular request of some of the clergy in the vicinity of his parish, who held weekly lectures for the benefit of their parishioners, our venerable friend would occasionally assist them. To meet the repulse which the Doctor had given him on the charge of itinerancy, Mr. P. in his reply to the Doctor's answer, interrogates him in these terms: 'Have you not preached in the neighbourhood of Plymouth? Did you never preach on a week-day at Egg-Buckland?' &c. &c. To which the Doctor responds, in the true spirit of a well-taught scholar, 'Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will, and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who has called me to this state of salvation, and I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.'

The Doctor complains very justly of a cruel, mischievous, and unjust remark, which Mr. P. made in this second letter. In a note referring to his *Devout Soldier*, preached in 1781, he saith, 'You then contemplated the bended knee and the uplifted eye of the soldier, with admiration; but now it seems, you, *primâ facie*, damn every soldier and sailor to the flames

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[n] Vol. IX. page 400.

of hell.' To meet this unwarrantable assertion, the Doctor very properly and seriously puts the question, 'Is there a single sentence or word in any of my preachings or writings, which hath even the most remote tendency to favour such a construction? Do you mean to hold me forth both to the army and navy as meriting their execrations? And do you indeed intend to expose me to any personal evil, which any of either order, stimulated by your representations, might be prompted to attempt? Is this the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, who tells the world, that nothing can afford comfort in the hour of death, but the consciousness of having done justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God?'[a]

This charge of his certainly must have been penned, in a most thoughtless and inconsiderate frame of mind; to say nothing of the malignity, that seems to conceal itself under this cruel, wanton, and unsubstantiated assertion. In a parish like Charles, where, in the time of war, there are so many convened both of the army and navy, such language was as dangerous as it was inflammatory. Many a soldier and sailor will, however, have to thank God on his behalf, when time's last tempest shall have spent its strength, and all the conflicts of life are ended.

Meeting all this calumny with meekness and firmness, the Vicar of Charles thus writes in his own defence, which I transcribe, because it is not irrelevant to our purpose, but makes him, in some measure, his own biographer. 'I shall not be accused, I hope, by a generous public, of unnecessary vanity in wiping off this foul reproach, if I bring forward certain facts, which otherwise might have savoured of ostentation. It is the only way, perhaps, to repel a charge of this nature, by shewing what my conduct hath been, opposed to what Mr. Polwhele saith. And if a life of continual labour and unremitting fatigue in the ministry, can be considered as the best evidences of christian love; perhaps

[a] Vol. IX. page 402.

it may be found, in the end of the day, that Dr. Hawker hath no reason to shrink from a comparison with Mr. Polwhele, in services rather to promote the eternal welfare of his fellow creatures, than to pronounce their destruction.'

'In the close of the year 1797, I accepted the deputy-chaplaincy of the garrison at Plymouth, and with no other view, than that of having the door of the army opened, as far as my province of duty might extend, to speak to the military the great truths of salvation. By virtue of my office, it became a branch of my duty to visit the sick in the hospitals, both in the garrison at Plymouth, and the military hospital at Stoke Village, which is somewhat two miles distant from the garrison. And in consequence of this appointment, during the two years which I have held this office, I have for the greater part of that time, once in every week, both in summer's heat and winter's rain, discharged the duty of visiting those hospitals. In the execution of which, at the Stoke hospital particularly, (while the sick troops continued in that temporary building, and before the new hospital was opened near Stoke church,) I have performed divine service, in prayers and expounding the scriptures, sometimes in the *three* distinct wards of that hospital, and always in two of them, when the other was not in use, amidst the floating miasmata of the typhus, and the effluvia of other disorders. And this I have done, without any kind of emolument whatever, the whole profits of the appointment being, from the first moment in which I entered upon it to the present hour, regularly paid over by me, as soon as received, to the gentleman who hath done me the honour of assisting me in the duties of my church, while I have been engaged in the duties of the garrison. And that the testimony of these facts may not rest on my bare assertion, the Rev. Mr. Sullock, who is the clergyman connected with me in this service, hath, at my request, very kindly consented to subjoin his certificate to satisfy the public mind on this point. I now very cheerfully leave it to every man's candour to determine,

whether such services can be supposed to correspond with Mr. Polwhele's cruel expression, that I damn every soldier and sailor to the flames of hell.' The certificate referred to is found in the margin of the letter,[a] and demonstrates the disinterestedness with which he undertook this laborious and important office.

Whilst he held the deputy-chaplaincy, I have known him leave his friendly circle, at a late hour of the night, to visit a poor sick soldier of the garrison, who had expressed a wish to see him, though the distance was considerable, and when many, from the lateness of the hour, would have felt themselves justified in deferring the visit till the next day. With many of the army and navy he kept up a regular correspondence, nor, whenever his advice was sought, were the humblest in the ranks withheld this favour; ever 'happy in being the instrument only of good to his fellow creatures,' more especially in relieving the burdens, or assuaging the sorrows of any of the Lord's contrite ones. From one of this humble rank, now residing in Scotland, I received not long since a letter, from which I solicit the indulgence of making a brief extract, as it affords one proof out of many, that his ministry was not without a seal among the soldiery; and it comes recommended with this additional interest, that the writer thereof was one, with whom our worthy friend kindly kept up an occasional interchange of letters for many years. 'I have the pleasure,' saith he, '*although very unworthy* of such a favour, of being one of Dr. HAWKER's humble correspondents—being a soldier in the Royal Perth Militia, I was, through the agency of the Spirit, and the preaching of Dr. HAWKER, brought, I hope, to a saving knowledge of the truth "as it is in Jesus." We corresponded, after my leaving Plymouth in 1814, receiving always with his letter, a copy of his New Year's Address to the Church of Christ. About nineteen months ago, I named my child

[a] Vol. IX. page 404.

and only son, when baptized, ROBERT HAWKER, as a *remembrancer*, (should the Lord spare him) of the Lord's goodness to me, through means of his dear and worthy servant.' In the fulness of his heart, he mentions, that he had noticed this circumstance to the family, a circumstance which, though trivial in its nature, is interesting in its motive, that they might know, 'that Dr. HAWKER lived yet in a lively remembrance in a humble little cottage, amongst the cold mountains of Caledonia.'

I have before me the copy of a letter,[a] sent to Dr. HAWKER, about the time of Mr. Polwhele's controversy, from a chaplain in the royal navy, which has no reference to the controversy, but shews, in conjunction with the former letter, what claims were made on his time from both departments. He was better known, and more beloved, both in the navy and army, than perhaps any other minister in his day. The letter furnishes such a specimen of the operations of divine grace among some, who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business on the great waters, that I make no apology for introducing it; since it proves, that there was not wanting, even then in the navy, such as sought his prayers, rather than feared his condemnation.

'*The Q. at Sea, I don't know where.*

'FEBRUARY 9, 1799.

'MY VERY DEAR SIR,

'I write at a peradventure, (but what is there that is not a peradventure, save the Rock of Ages?) to tell you, that I am well in bodily health, and would I could add, that I was well in the only sense in which it is worth being well. But, though I trust the Lord means to let the lustre of his countenance shine upon me; yet, at present, I only see him through a cloud of doubts, fears, and dismal apprehensions. My love is cold, my hope is faint, my faith is weak; and the only source of consolation that assures me that the Lord

[a] Zion's Trumpet, Vol. II. page 174.

has not left me altogether is, that I am restless and uneasy under the bondage of corruption, and groaning to be delivered from this body of death. Would you believe there could be such callous insensibility about the human heart? I hung over eternity last night by an hair, and yet this morning the emotions of grateful acknowledgments, for lengthening out the time of grace and patience, have vanished like the morning dew! O pray for me, my dear Sir, and wrestle at the throne of grace on my behalf, that the Lord Jesus would make a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.

'I hope and trust the work about me goes on prosperously. The Lord seems to have laid to his hand in several instances, and we know, that his arm is not shortened, that it cannot save. He has indeed been dealing out many awful dispensations of late before our eyes! Dissolutions so sudden, and rescues so marvellous, I never remember to have witnessed; and I rejoice to see that these warnings have not been in vain to some of the survivors. They have construed the admonition the right way, and are going on, I trust, from seriousness to salvation. I am now attending a death-bed, where, I think, I perceive the symptoms most desirable, a self-loathing and a self-distrust. On this foundation I look forward to behold the glorious fabric of the gospel erected, and the hopes of the condemned sinner realized, before the spirit returns to God who gave it.

'I remain, dear Sir,

'Your's, very truly and sincerely in Christ,

'E. W.'

'P. S. The weather has been very turbulent ever since we have been out. The wind has shifted so often, and the sun so constantly concealed his face, that we have been, in some measure, uncertain about our precise situation. What an emblem of man is the ocean! The ship a-head has just made signal for land. Would it were the true *terra firma!*'

The severity of Mr. Polwhele's remark led us to notice the deep interest which this man of God took in the spiritual

welfare of both the army and navy; and enough has been said, I trust, to shew, that it was no less unjust than severe; but to return to our review of the controversy. So sorely did the vicar of Manaccan feel, from the Doctor's answer to his second letter, that he disclaims any further communication with him, and addresses a letter to the bishop of Exeter on the itinerancy and nonconformity of the Vicar of Charles, complaining of his unfairness and subtilty in argument. 'But Dr. H. is fond,' saith he, 'of discussing such questions, as arise from the articles of liturgy, that he may entangle his church opponents in their talk. For his shield and his spear, he has recourse to the church armoury, whence his antagonists profess to have borrowed theirs.' What an acknowledgment was this of his own weakness, and of the justice of the Doctor's cause! What questions could be more suitable for polemical divinity? or with what weapons could he more fairly meet his antagonists in the field?

The Doctor, in his *third* letter to Mr. Polwhele, says, that, by his conduct in his affairs, and by his subsequent appeal to the bishop, in calling in his lordship's authority to his aid, he acts like a school-boy, who skulks from behind to give the first blow, and, when he has been well beaten for his temerity and presumption, declares off to fight no more, and runs away to the master with the tale. 'But, sir,' saith he, 'you should be told, that my zeal in the best of causes was not reserved for the bishop's knowledge to come from your information. It is a point, with which his lordship has been long acquainted. And in a letter, which I had the honour to receive from him on the subject, prior to the first opening of this correspondence of yours with me, he was pleased to observe, that he was persuaded, I was too well grounded in the principles, which animated me in the discharge of my duty, not to be prepared to exert them, through evil report as well as good report. And this, among other civil things, which his lordship, at that time, was pleased to say to me, was not in consequence of any servile adulation shewn by me

towards his lordship; but the free and spontaneous result of his own mind. I knew too well the deference due to the bishop's rank not to be ready to give him suitable respect on all occasions; but, whilst I keep in view his dignity, I never lost sight of my own. And, as to the prospect of preferment, I am confident, that the bishop, if ever he condescends to speak of the subject, will do me the justice to acknowledge, that, from the very commencement of our correspondence, I disclaimed all views of the kind. I begged his lordship to understand, though in the most modest and least offensive manner I was able, (what to a man of Mr. Polwhele's complexion, must be marvellous indeed) that he had nothing to bestow in the way of preferment, which I would accept. In the vicarage of Charles, I had attained to the highest dignity I coveted in the present life.[a]

In his reply to the charge of *nonconformity*, because he met his people for the purpose of prayer, in the chamber of the paralytic, or in the school-room of the orphan-house, he thus writes: 'It forms, in my view, a new dictionary in language, which the dullness of my apprehension prevents me from understanding, that it is become a crime to fill up the intermediate hours, which the *public* demands of my church do not occupy, to the promotion of the same important purposes, by *private* visitations among the people. I confess, indeed, that, in all this, there is evidently a very strong *nonconformity* to the conduct of writers of religious jest-books, and to men, who subscribe to doctrines, which they have the unblushing confidence to tell the world they do not believe.'[b]

In the close of the controversy, Mr. Polwhele seems to avow more unequivocally his conviction, that mere morality cannot save. 'The Doctor thinks,' saith he, 'that I hold forth salvation to christians on the ground of mere morality. God forbid, that such a sentiment should ever be published—should ever be cherished—should ever arise in the heart of

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[a] Vol. IX. page 429. [b] Vol. IX. page 430.

any minister of Christ Jesus—of any one who professes himself a christian.'[a] But it would be well for all to know, who profess themselves ministers of Christ, that to build our salvation partly on morality and partly on the Lord Jesus is equally perilous. The house partly on the rock and partly on the sand will not stand in the day of trial. If once built on the Rock which is laid in Zion, we shall need no sweeter, stronger motive to live to his glory, than that love to him, which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

From the base attacks made upon his public character (for against his private character, they could allege nothing), some of his friends took alarm, lest his public ministry might be impeded, or his personal safety be endangered; others recommended prosecution, thereby to seek redress and to silence slander; some of his own family also began to be apprehensive, what would be the result of all this enmity and rancour against him; for Mr. Polwhele was not the only one who endeavoured to prejudice the public mind against this laborious and exemplary servant of Christ. But a letter from him to one of his daughters, pending these circumstances, shews the state of his mind, under all this calumny, and with what feelings he met the advice of those, who wished him to seek redress by legal proceedings.

'PLYMOUTH, DEC. 9, 1799.

'MY SWEET DEAR CHILD,

'How astonished am I to discover, by the complexion of your letter, your distress of mind at the persecution I sustain; after what you have seen and known of the same for many years. Read the 12th and following verses of the 4th chap. of the first of Peter, and you will immediately perceive, that these are among the necessary marks of our high calling. "No *man*," saith Paul, "ought to be moved by these afflictions, because you yourselves know, that ye are appointed thereuuto." And if no man, no poor humble soldier in the mere ranks of

[a] Letter III. page 67.

the army—what a dastard must be a subaltern who carries his King's commission, if he be moved! Job says, "Let my enemy write a book; surely I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown to me," chap. xxxi. 35, 36. You seem to fear the depth and finesse of my adversary. Alas! my dear dear daughter, where is your faith? I can say of him, and all the clan, as David did to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword and spear; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord, whom thou hast defied." You talk also of actions. Alas! my dear dear ——, here again you lack faith. The action to be brought is already began; I have brought it and lodged it in court, and the day of decision is coming. And it is in such a court, where no lawyer will be wanted, nor counsellor to plead. Fact, mere fact, will be all that is needed, and as sure as the Lord is true, those assassins of my reputation will feel a decision; unless by repentance it is prevented, which will amply do away all the injury they have done me. I might imitate the example of Moses, and if I did, it would be on equal ground, by saying, "Respect not thou their offering," Numb. xvi. 15. But I rather would copy his bright example, who said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." You forget my dearest ——, that this battle I am fighting is the Lord's. It is not against *me*. It is not *Dr. Hawker, Vicar of Charles*, with whom they contend; for if I had preached only the dry system of morality and not the doctrine of the cross, never, no never would they have come forward against me, though I had got drunk and tumbled into the grave after the corpse. But it is Dr. H. *the preacher of vital godliness*, they hate, and therefore, persecute. But let them alone, his is the cause, whom I so poorly serve; and he, in his time, not ours, will vindicate his own.

'I write this by return of post, merely to make you easy. If my happiness will contribute to yours, be assured, that I never, in any one period of my life, enjoyed more perfect happiness, more tranquillity, than in the moment I now am

writing to my dearest dear ——. If I am ever low in the contest, it is in this consideration, (and which the enemy I know suggests):—my dear children, who are dearer to me than life, will complain, 'Oh, had our father used the opportunities he hath had of getting forward, he might have been high in life, and raised our fortunes.' When I turn my thoughts to this side of the subject, and hear or fancy I hear my dear children's reproaches—then I sometimes falter. But blessed be God these thoughts are but momentary. If I do not advance your fortunes in this life, I am truly confident, *my* God will recompense you, for what you lose in a better. Hosanna! my dear ——, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." I hope to see you next week, till then the Lord be with you, as he is always with me. I preached yesterday from these words, "Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her King in her?" Jer. viii. 19. And now I feel the sweetness of the passage to my own experience. I can, and do, with full confidence say, "The Lord of Hosts is with me. The God of Jacob is my refuge." Surely you will be easy after these assurances. Only consider these events as furnishing out to me work for prayer, and then you will see the mercy of the dispensation. Go, says God, and let the enemy attack him—wound his reputation—asperse his name—I shall have more of his company. Long prosperity makes him like stagnant water. Oh, how gracious is our God! I charge you, my dear dear child, rest more on the Rock of Ages, and then you will see the unreasonableness of your fears, concerning

'Your tender and affectionate father,

'R. Hawker.'

In the year 1798, a small periodical was commenced by a society of clergymen, under the title of 'Zion's Trumpet,' not as a rival publication to others; but chiefly to disseminate and illustrate the doctrines of the Church of England. To this little theological miscellany he contributed largely. Zion's Trumpet to the watchmen upon her walls—to her

watchmen which go about the city—to the camp in Israel—to the deserters from the camp of Israel—to God's ancient people, the Jews—to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth—to the mourners in Zion, these seven blasts from this Trumpet were blown by this devoted priest of the most high God. In one of the papers contributed to this little work, he strongly recommends to every one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, to mark down in the diary of his own life, memorandums of the Lord's mercy and grace towards him, as well in the sorrowful as in the prosperous pages of his history. From which the faithfulness of God, and the immutability of his promise, may be traced in his own experience.

'The following extract,' saith he, 'from the diary of one accustomed to remark God's gracious dealings with his soul, may serve as a guide to others, who may be encouraged to adopt the same plan. The author of the diary, it is true, is of the sacred order; but observations of the discipline with which the Lord trains up his people in the school of grace, will furnish similar remarks, according to their respective situations in life, wherever his providence has been pleased to place them.'

The specimen given is well known to be from his own diary, not exactly as inserted in the original, but here and there a remark selected, as might best promote the object which he then had in view. 'Jacob's pillar at Bethel; Hagar's well at Beer-lahai-roi; Moses's altar on the victory over Amalek, inscribed Jehovah-nissi; and Gideon's, of Jehovah-shalom. What are all these,' saith he, 'but so many memorials of those sweet and gracious providences intended to refresh God's people in their road to Canaan? And when the believer himself makes each instance more especially his own, by setting up his own Ebenezer, "that hitherto the Lord hath helped him," this becomes practical and personal, and is, (in the language of the apostle) "what the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."'

Extracts from his Diary, for the Year 1797.

'*Jan.* 1, 1797. *Lord's day morning.*—After a comfortable night's rest, through the good hand of my God upon me, I was awakened with a refreshing passage of scripture, brought to my mind with some peculiar energy, "Ask what I shall give thee?" I recollected that it was new year's day, and the Lord's day also. The new year's gift which I ask, Holy Father, through the name of Jesus, is the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit, I replied; increasing grace every day, and that the love of God may be shed abroad more and more in my heart by the divine power. Oh, that the grace of the Holy Spirit may rest upon me, in my person, in my family, in the church of Christ over which the Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer! That I may see the work of the Lord prosper in my hand, and of the travail of my Redeemer's soul, and be satisfied. I found my heart much drawn out in prayer on each of these points, and have reason to bless God for so auspicious a commencement of the new year.

'*Memorandum in the evening of the same day.*—Never, surely, did a year open with more promising and auspicious appearances. I found great strength through all my public services this day, in my morning, afternoon, and evening ministrations. Is it not worth the remark, O my soul, that after the labour of the day was over, and before I sat down to supper, a man came to inform me of some gracious impressions wrought on the mind of a young person in the congregation, under the instrumentality of the word! "Ask what I shall give thee?" occurred to my mind most sweetly. Oh, what a God-awakening, hearing, and answering prayer, is my God!

'*Monday morning, Jan.* 2.—"Ask what I shall give thee?" is still my motto; and I pray God that I may never lose sight of it, and of the refreshments which this portion of scripture, applied as it hath been to my personal experience in yesterday's mercy, hath afforded me.

'*Jan.* 10.—A day of providences, but not of gratitude. Oh, my forgetful heart.

'*Jan.* 16.—The world broke in upon me this day, like a tide; somewhat comforted in the evening.

'*Jan.* 24.—Went to visit Mr. and Mrs. ——, on the death of their eldest son. This dear youth was a very promising child; and from some expressions, which dropped from him during his long illness, great reason there is to hope, that he was a child of God. What can reconcile us to the separation of ties so tender; but the assurances that our departed child or brother has fallen "asleep in Jesus?"

'*Feb.* 17.—Heard this day of the death of Mrs. ———. Poor woman! I lament, that any thing should have arisen to prevent me from seeing her in her last hours. She made a jest of my religious principles; and my proud nature withdrew from her acquaintance. But ought I to have withdrawn for this? Might I not have gained upon her by a gentleness of persuasion? Was it not quitting the ground to the enemy to leave the cause as I did? Lord, lay not this sin to my charge! Oh, may the Lord have regenerated her heart and received her to his mercy in Christ Jesus, before she was called hence!

'*Feb.* 25.—The prayer-meeting this evening was particularly refreshing.

'*Dec.* 31.—The end of the year 1797, which began so auspiciously, ended as mercifully. And I do not recollect through the whole, that I experienced one half-hour's sickness from the beginning to the end of it. Upon the review, I see much to admire and adore of the Lord's gracious dealings, and abundant reason to take shame and confusion of face in my unprofitableness and short comings—"Ask, what I shall give thee," said the Lord. But, Oh, my God, how much more bountiful have been thy gifts, than my requests!'[a]

It is much to be regretted, that the original diary, which he

[a] Zion's Trumpet, Vol. II. p. 67.

kept to the close of his pilgrimage, when his views were more distinct, his judgment more mature, his communion with God more intimate, and his joy in the Lord more abundant, has been lost. Not that the veteran has a nature less corrupt or less carnal to contend with than the youngest disciple, who is made a new creature in Christ. They are both only renewed "in the spirit of their mind;" their body is still a vile body, a corrupt body, and will and must continue so, till renewed from the grave. All his papers fell into the hands of his daughter Anna, who superintended his house after the decease of her mother, and became his sole executrix, to whom he gave direction either to preserve or destroy his memorandums, as she thought proper. As in these papers, many things were noted, which only concerned his own family, and could not be of any interest to others, it is feared, that they have all been destroyed; though judicious sketches from these unvarnished portraits of his heart, taken in every varied shade of position or attitude, would have been deemed an invaluable acquisition to a large circle of his friends. Indeed extracts of this nature, from the memorandums of a man so deeply acquainted with things spiritual, must have been very acceptable, and no doubt beneficial to all his "companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," Rev. i. 9.

It was in this little Miscellany, for July, 1799, first appeared his Zion's Pilgrim. 'He that goes a pilgrimage after Bunyan, and writes the journal of his progress, undertakes,' says one of his reviewers, 'no small difficulty. Dr. HAWKER has, however, struck out a path of so much novelty, and presented so many interesting objects on every stage, that except at the house of the interpreter, we are scarcely reminded of our old friend John in all the way.' Indeed it has all the pathos and elegancy of Sterne without his affectation and ribaldry. One incident arising out of another, keeps the attention continually awake; and the varied scenes, which present themselves to your view, furnish the mind with many a rich subject

for contemplation, as you accompany the pilgrim in his eventful path.

'It was not,' saith he, 'until that I had passed a very considerable portion of time in the life of man, that I felt the full conviction of my being but a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth. I pause—in the moment of recollection to look back upon the whirlpool, in which for so many years I was hurried on by the unceasing current! unconscious of the perilous situation in which I then moved, and unconcerned at what I saw of the sudden departure of those around me, swallowed up in the vortex. Dread power! awful even in thy mercies! Do I now stand secure on the edge, upheld by a strength not my own, no longer within the reach of the tide, and beholding the solemn prospect of thousands still ingulphed? Can I call to mind the past danger, and the present deliverance, unmoved with pity over the unthinking throng, and untouched with gratitude to thee the sole Author of every mercy? I feel (blessed be the grace that inspires it!) the rising hymn of thankfulness in my heart, while the tear drops from my eye: "Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world!"

'I hardly know at what period to commence my history. All that part of life, which I spent prior to my conversion, I cannot reckon in the estimate of really living. He only lives, who lives to God's glory—all else is but a blank in creation. I can only tell the reader, that if from my first apprehension of divine things must commence the calculation of my real life, I have but a little path to go over. But from this era would I desire to date my history. What were the *secondary* means, which the Lord in his providence was pleased to employ, it is not so interesting to be informed, as to behold their efficacy under grace. It will be sufficient for him to know, that from an ardent pursuit, like that of the generality of the world, of the several objects which attract attention in the circle of life, I found my mind suddenly

arrested by matters of a higher nature; and among the first evidences of a renewed life, I discovered two or three leading principles manifesting the mighty change. As for example:—from being occupied in an unremitting regard to things temporal, I now found my heart earnest to pursue the things which are eternal: and if, at any time, the necessary and unavoidable claims of the world broke in upon me to call off my attention, my heart, like the needle under magnetic influence, which cannot be long diverted from the object of its attraction, soon was turned again to its favourite pursuit. In like manner, the troubles of life, and the disappointments necessary to the present preliminary state, which, in the days of my unregeneracy operated with all their severity, now lost their power, or at least became lessened in the great anxiety of what might be my situation in the world to come. This, like the ocean, whose boundless bosom takes in all the rivers flowing into it, swallowed up every lesser stream of sorrow; and, an awakened concern for "the one thing needful," made me forget every other consideration.'

These are among his preliminary remarks; but through the whole his style is elegant, yet familiar; his imagery affluent, yet not gaudy; the incidents are for the most part from real life; yet, in connecting them together, he has, like Bunyan, borrowed the dress of allegory, and indulged in the language of fiction. Some of the closing scenes of Zion's Pilgrim's chequered way were first published in the Gospel Magazine, and were no doubt a transcript of his own views, feelings, and circumstances at the time he wrote them; to which, reference will be hereafter made, in describing some of the last days of this eminent saint of God.

Bunyan and Milton were two favourite authors of our venerable friend; on both of which he has written notes, which are before the public. His notes on Bunyan are confined to the second part, to accompany the first part with notes by Scott and Newton. 'My chief object, in the notes I have offered,' saith he, on Milton's Paradise Lost, 'hath

been to shew what a rich vein of true divinity runs through the whole work, and that our author was as sound a divine, as he was great as a poet.'

His Zion's Warrior was also first published in the same miscellany, commencing in June, 1801, under the title of the Soldier's Manual. In his introduction, he says, 'Having exercised some little portion of my ministry among the military in this neighbourhood, (meaning as deputy-chaplain of the garrison, at Plymouth) I have been frequently led to reflect, that there is a striking affinity, in many instances, between the profession of a soldier and that of a christian. And under this impression, I have thought, that it might be instrumentally conducive to the glory of God, if some little tract, displaying the resemblance, were drawn up with suitable reflections, and dispersed among the army; by the perusal of which, the soldier's mind might be led on to the consideration of the solemn and interesting claims of religion, even whilst engaged in the employment of his profession.'

'The truly christian soldier,' saith he, 'for only such know any thing of the spiritual warfare, cannot read this little Manual without being led to see, that the same God, who chooseth our inheritance for us, hath also chosen him to be a soldier.' The reflection he makes on the deserter brought back to head-quarters, is affectingly beautiful: 'Yonder behold a deserter brought back to head-quarters. Ah! thoughtless youth! what could be the motive to tempt you to forego the oath you have taken to allegiance, and shamefully run from your king and country's service? And what possible persuasion could it be to impose upon your better knowledge, with the hope to escape from being taken and brought back to punishment? But pause, my soul, over the thought, and recollect what a deserter am I from the standard of Christ Jesus! What motive has influenced me, times without number, to desert from so kind and gracious an employment, and to run away from a master whose

very service is perfect freedom! There is one striking similarity between the character of the deserter among soldiers, and a man who backslides from the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The deserter never returns again to his regiment, until either by persuasion he is prevailed upon by the promise of pardon to come back, or is compelled to it by necessity. Just so the christian. After a season of remissness and disobedience and departure, though the sweet voice of grace is ever proclaiming, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding, saith the Lord," yet there is neither power nor disposition to return until God inclines the heart.'[a]

In the year 1801, to which we are arrived in the chronological order of our narration, he lost by death his beloved mother. Spared to a great age, and confined to her apartment, if not to her bed, to her he paid his daily visit, except when from home, or unavoidable duties prevented, which occurred but seldom. And there beside her couch, he might as regularly be found, pouring out his heart before God in strains of ardent affection for daily supplies of spiritual strength and consolation to be administered to his aged parent. Happy in administering to her any little temporal comfort, which the languor of nature in her advanced age required; which happiness was only heightened when he saw the tear glisten in her eye, whilst the prayer for her eternal safety rose warm from his heart. Indeed, he proved himself the most affectionate of sons to the most affectionate of mothers. 'Dear name!' saith he, in his Sailor Pilgrim, of which we shall hereafter speak, 'the very mention of it awakens remembrance in my mind to a thousand images of tenderness, which marked her character towards me in the boyish days of my life: *then*, indeed, but coolly considered, and, I fear, but as unthankfully acknowledged; but now she is no more, they rise to my recollection in all the warmth of

[a] Vol. III. page 481.

affectionate remembrance, and tell me how much she loved by what she did.'[a] Although he there speaks in the character of the Sailor Pilgrim, yet in drawing this sketch of the most tender of parents, it is not to be supposed that he was unmindful of his own. Stronger affection, or more assiduous attention, could never be witnessed in a son than he was wont to shew to his venerable mother. Can the admirers of the mere moral school exhibit a finer specimen of filial attachment, in which is interwoven, with the best affections of nature, the liveliest concern for her spiritual consolation and meetenings for glory?

In 1802, he commenced a society for distributing religious tracts, denominated, 'The Great Western Society, for dispersing religious tracts among the poor (gratis) in the western district.' Although his numerous engagements prevented him from paying all the attention he could wish to this department of his literary engagement—himself, as I have heard him say with much pleasantry, the sole committee, chairman, treasurer, secretary, and editor—yet he furnished the religious world with several new and useful tracts. To answer a supposed question—Is not such a plan rendered unnecessary, by reason of those societies which are already established with the same object in view in London? The worthy editor remarks, 'The scripture saith, that "two are better than one." And while we wish all imaginable success to every society formed upon the principles of sound religion and vital godliness, we venture to believe, that there is yet room for more. Besides, we find that tracts can be printed as cheap in the country as they are in town, and thereby we avoid the expense of carriage. So that, on principles of frugality, our plan is worthy to be adopted.' In reference to the dissemination of the gospel by means of tracts, in addition to other arguments, he saith, 'To mention no more, what a field of the richest charity is opened before every

[a] Vol. III. page 261.

man of tender and compassionate feelings, when he considers what the gospel affords in its balm of comfort, and under its various applications to the sickness, sorrows, darkness, and the ten thousand instances of misery which beset the path of life, and which are the sad consequences of sin, and the natural effects of our present fallen state.'

The title of one of these tracts is quite novel to me: '*Bible Nuts*, made easy for the tooth both of young and grown children.' It reminds me of some of the titles of the old puritan's books, which still attract notice from their singularity and quaintness, and furnish no mean dessert to the banqueting christian. The Bible Nuts are such texts of scripture as require opening by gospel elucidations, before their fulness and sweetness can be seen or tasted; but when thus opened, furnish many a rich kernel to the spiritual mind that knows how to relish them, whether young or old in the life of faith.

In the same year that he commenced his Great Western Religious Tract Society, he was invited to preach for the London Missionary Society. His sermon on that occasion is before the public, preached at the church of St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, London, May 14, 1802, from Rom. x. 14, 15. A more important subject for such a purpose could not have been chosen, than the title implies, 'The Work of the Holy Ghost essential to give success to all missions for the Gospel.' No collections were, at that time, made after the sermons preached on the occasion. To this practice he felt a strong objection; not that he deemed it improper or unnecessary to furnish gospel ministers with the means of visiting foreign climes to preach to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ, for St. Paul had remittances made to him from the church at Philippi; "For even in Thessalonica," saith he, "ye sent once and again to my necessity," Phil. iv. 16.—but he objected to a practice, too frequent on such occasions, of urging the necessity of giving money, as if the more money there were subscribed or raised,

the more souls there would be converted and saved. This is wretched divinity. If the professing church were to fill the whole world with preachers, it would avail nothing as to the conversion or salvation of the soul, unless the word preached were accompanied with "an unction from the Holy One." I write not this to discourage missionary labours, undertaken in the simple faith of the gospel; but to call the attention of the reader to an important truth stated in this sermon, that, 'as the success of the preacher's labours wholly depends upon his being called to the work, and sent forth by the Spirit's immediate direction; so no less, to render it effectual to the hearer, the same almighty power must dispose the heart to receive the truth in the love of it.'[a]

When Paul and Barnabas preached the word of salvation to the Gentiles, we read, that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts xiii. 48. And wherever the same word is preached, the same results will follow. We learn from the apostle himself, what was the extent of his views in all his missionary labours: "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory," 2 Tim. ii. 10. Wherever and whenever an effectual door is opened, let the gospel be preached, and elders be appointed in every city; but, after all this is done, there will be no increase, until "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii. 19. So injudiciously and unwarrantably have many spoken of converting the whole world by missionary efforts, and have calculated so much on the number and efficiency of missionaries appointed, or to be appointed to this work, that you would almost suppose, that they had yet to learn "whether there be any Holy Ghost," by whose alone power sinners are quickened, renewed, converted, sealed, and sanctified. Seeing, that there was so much ascribed to, and so much expected from mere human agency, by many of the advocates of missionary societies, our worthy

[a] Vol. II. page 249.

friend, in his latter years, thought it right rather to withhold his subscription, than to give countenance to such proceedings. How far he adopted the best measure to be pursued in such a case, I know not; but of this I am persuaded, that he undertook nothing of importance without much deliberation and prayer; and, no doubt, sought direction from on high in this particular. As to public collections for missions, he thought, that many are induced to give on such occasions from improper motives felt, and from improper arguments used; and that the feelings of the poor are too often wrought upon, by the zeal or energy or unscriptural colouring of the preacher, to give from a principle very different from that which induced the poor people of Corinth to contribute to the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

From whatever motives others may contribute their mite, and it is beyond a doubt that they are not always pure motives, and although there may be ground to fear that some sent by such societies are not sent of the Lord; yet I know some among them who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth; and when I subscribe my mite, I wish always to keep in view, that it is contributed for this or that dear servant of Christ, whom I know and love in the truth, who needs this assistance, whilst he endures the heat of sultry climes, and many painful deprivations for the elect's sake; happy, amidst all he endures, if through his humble instrumentality only one poor wanderer may be brought home to the fold of Christ, "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. Although our beloved and venerable friend withheld his subscription, he withheld not his best affections from such missionaries as preached the gospel in all its freeness, fulness, richness, and sovereignty, to the glory of the eternal Three in One. Not only his heart, but his hand was open to send them, if not remittances in money, donations in books, whenever and wherever he thought such a present would be acceptable.

Of all the missionaries sent out by the Church Missionary Society, perhaps not one was more eminently blessed of God than the Rev. W. B. Johnson, at Sierra Leone; and perhaps not one came nearer in his doctrines to the purity of the gospel. The Lord acknowledged his own word, and made it effectual to the salvation of many. There are two letters sent by him to the Rev. Dr. HAWKER, published in the Gospel Magazine, for August, 1824, which will substantiate what I have recorded, and will shew how much the Doctor's writings were prized by this zealous, humble, and highly distingnished missionary. If all other missionaries would indulge a hope of being equally blessed, they must not only preach the redeeming love of Christ, but the electing love of the Father, and the renewing grace of the Holy Ghost.

'The following letters,' say the editors, 'were sent for our perusal without any restraint on their publication. The artless strain of the composition, and the primitive simplicity of the diction, press upon us to lay them before our readers, without any comment of our own. The privacy enjoined by Mr. Johnson in the first letter, is now superseded by the death of that faithful servant of Christ, which will render any apology unnecessary. Our friend, (the Rev. Dr. HAWKER) who has conveyed the letters to us, observes, that one circumstance in Mr. Johnson's first letter, is worthy of peculiar notice, namely, that of *the twenty-five tribes of different tongues*, from the banks of the Niger, that they should *all speak the English language;* as if, in the Lord's everlasting ordination, they were thus suited for the ministry of Mr. Johnson, that by his mouth they might hear the joyful sound, when sent by the Spirit to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Such are the ways and works of our wonderful-working God.'[a]

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[a] Gospel Magazine, 1824, page 360.

LETTER I.

'Regent's Town Colony, Sierra Leone,
'June 5, 1821.

'Reverend and Dear Sir,

'Your kind note of October 23, 1820, with The Poor Man's Commentary on the New Testament, came safe to hand about the middle of March; and I herewith desire to make my grateful acknowledgments for your great kindness in sending that work, which has proved a blessing to my soul, and I trust to the people over whom God the Holy Ghost has made me overseer. You have also been so kind as to promise the Commentary on the Old Testament, which I shall receive with joy. Mr. Hullah will be so kind, and forward the same.

'The people, amongst whom our covenant Jehovah has been pleased to place me, are the liberated negroes of various tribes, of about twenty-five different tongues, chiefly from the banks of the Niger. About twelve hundred attend my ministry, of which, three hundred have been baptized, and are communicants, who, as far as one can conceive, live a life of faith. The whole speak English; being of so many different nations, they are compelled to speak it. None, but the people amongst whom I live, like to hear me preach; there are few of other settlements that do attend. Europeans I have none, except my own family. The doctrines of sovereign grace are not relished, and I cannot preach any other, and my people like to hear no other. It is sovereign grace, which I have received from the Father of mercy, through the Mercy of mercies, the Lord Jesus Christ; applied by God the Holy Ghost to my sinful heart, and no other can be acknowledged by me. O that God the Holy Ghost may make me more and more wise unto salvation, and reveal unto me the mysteries of grace!

'This sheet is too small to enter upon it at large, which respects my past life; I shall just mention a few of the prin-

ciple occurences, during my being of thirty years. When I was nineteen, I ran from my father's home, spent all I had, and parted with my last shirt, and then engaged as a soldier in the German Legion, (being a Hanoverian,) in which I served his majesty five years; during that period I was in the bombardment of Copenhagen; in Spain and Portugal; and, at the taking of Flushinzen, was most wonderfully preserved in many hot engagements. After the return from Flushinzen, I procured my liberty by making my escape to London; after being at that place about two years, and having filled up the measure of sin, it pleased the Lord to stop me in my madness by his sovereign grace. I did not attend any place of worship, and thus was not converted through hearing the word of God; but the Lord's time was come, and he is not bound to means.

'A portion of scripture, which I had learned when very young at school, darted into my mind, and instantly broke my stony heart, and I saw what a rebel I was; and, had not the Lord prevented me, I should have committed suicide. In short, I cannot describe the state of my mind, which was relieved however soon after, when it pleased the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, to smile upon me through the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, in the German language, was made very useful to me. However, my comforts did not continue long; for I fell into the hands of arminians, who brought me into deep mire. When I told them my distress, they proved to me miserable comforters: they told me to do this and that; but alas! the more I worked, the deeper I sunk, until I happened to drop into a chapel, where, through the instrumentality of one there preaching, I was much comforted, and I bid finally farewell to all arminianism. How I came to be engaged in the Church Missionary Society, I cannot exactly explain now; I can only say, that I have been engaged and sent out to this place entirely against my will, and endeavoured to disengage myself, until I got on board

the ship. The following scripture did constantly compose my mind, when under great temptations, after I was engaged in the missionary cause:—"I will bring the blind by the way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

'When I arrived here in this colony, I found it stocked with arminians; and, as soon as my sentiments were discovered, I was disliked, and it was thought proper to send me into the mountains of Sierra Leone, amongst the liberated negroes, who are the offscourings of Africa. I went, encouraged by the above-mentioned passage of scripture, fully persuaded that the sovereign grace of God was sufficient to change the greatest cannibal in Africa; and that, if God had from the beginning chosen any of them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, he would in due time call them to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first Sunday I had nine hearers, which has increased to at least twelve hundred. These people lived in the mountains by tens and twenties, and so were dispersed in every direction; they have, however, come out of the forest, and now at this place reside at present about fifteen hundred, children included; about six hundred attend school, and above two hundred can read the word of God.

'In 1817, a young man came out, who is now with Christ in glory, who had much profited by your ministry, and who brought out a number of your tracts, also the Poor Man's Commentary; and I must confess, that I firmly believe that that young man was sent for the purpose to bring those books here. I have reason to bless God, that they ever came into my hands. When I was in England in 1819, this young person died, and in his will desired that his books should be distributed amongst the remaining missionaries; but as I was absent then, they thought it right to pass me by, and I have not seen any of your works. What is become of them I

cannot tell; one who was present went to England, and has most likely taken them. But I must conclude, and as I have not disclosed to others what I have briefly stated above, I would beg you to let it remain with yourself. Being fully persuaded, that you daily watch the sovereign acts of our covenant Jehovah, I have been induced to state the above. Should you be pleased to favour me with a few lines in return, I should be extremely happy to receive them.

'Now may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the triune and covenant Jehovah, bless, preserve, and keep you, is the prayer, reverend and dear Sir, of your most humble and affectionate servant in Jesus,

'W. JOHNSON.'

LETTER II.

'REGENT'S TOWN COLONY, SIERRA LEONE,
'APRIL 20, 1822.

'MY DEAR SIR,

'Your very kind and affectionate letter of October 17, 1821, with a part of 'The Poor Man's Commentary on the Old Testament,' came safe to hand. Be so kind and accept my thanks for them. I trust it is another proof of the sovereign mercy of our covenant Jehovah, that he has inclined you to take notice of one of the most unworthy of the Lord's sheep in this distant land. I pray that the letter received may not be the last; but that you may feel still inclined to send me a few lines now and then. As the elect are *one* with their *glorious Head*, being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; they long and love to hear from each other, and of their Head, who is altogether lovely.

'I mentioned in my last, part of my past life, especially how I was led to adore that grace, which is free, full, and sovereign. I am still led to see and experience more and

more, that it is the only source of comfort to poor self-condemned sinners; and that those people only enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding, who have been and are led by God the Holy Ghost to see themselves interested in it. How few are in our days favoured to see these things! And why? "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Many will acknowledge the truth, but as much as possible avoid to bring it forward in the pulpit. The most of my fellow-labourers call themselves calvinists, but still they are not altogether orthodox. There is one, who was an arminian when I first arrived here, who withstood me to the face, but has since entirely changed: he fully agrees with me now in every point, has denied all he once asserted, and boldly preaches now a full Saviour. Since his change, it has pleased the Lord to bless his labours. Your works are much read and admired by him. The rest are not decided, they are something like those who are called 'evangelical preachers.' Sometimes they produce a little fruit, but it does not continue, but vanishes again like the early dew. We have a monthly prayer meeting, at which all missionaries attend, and which is the only opportunity I have to find out their sentiments. When they engage in prayer, they will address the Father through Christ, and perhaps pray for the Father's Spirit; but address neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost as distinct persons; and thus come so near unitarianism. I cannot feel comfortable, unless I address God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as three distinct persons in one covenant Jehovah.

'When you are pleased to write again, be so kind as to give me a few lines on this head. My humble flock enjoy these things, and I humbly trust, that many are under the divine teaching of God the Holy Ghost. Some time ago, a poor negro woman came to me and applied for baptism. As I have many visits of this kind, I paid at first very little attention to what she said; at length, however, my mind was drawn to listen to her story; and then, asked if she prayed?

She replied, 'Yes.' I asked, 'to whom do you pray?' And she replied, 'I pray to God the Holy Ghost, to shew me my sins, and give me understanding; I pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, to forgive me my sins, for he died for sinners; and I pray to God the Father, to receive me through the Lord Jesus Christ. Me sin too much, and that make me pray so.' I said, 'then you pray to three Gods!' 'No, massa, them three be one God.' Thus we see, that God teaches his people alike, whether they are black or white.

'Our church is now built large, and will accommodate when finished about two thousand persons. The number is great which attend, and all appear eager to hear the word; but I believe, that the real number of believers is still but small. May the Lord, who appeared unto Jacob, be with you in the close of your pilgrimage. So prays, your's, in the Lord Jesus Christ,

'W. B. JOHNSON.'

I have not introduced these letters merely by way of episode to my narration, though Mr. Johnson, as a correspondent of DR. HAWKER, might be allowed this mark of respect; but to shew in how many ways this man of God was made useful; not only in the army and navy, as before observed, but even among missionaries. Yet, from these letters we may note, that if a servant of Christ, wherever or whoever he may be, declare the sovereignty of God in the elcction of grace, "in making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory," how invariably these sentiments are disrelished by the carnal mind; and even by those who profess to believe them, how frequently are they withheld, either from worldly policy or a false delicacy, or an ungracious timidity lest they should give offence. But we may also note, that where this grand doctrine is made prominent in the ministry of the word, how the Lord works with the word, and confirms it with signs following.

I have indulged thus largely on the subject of missions, because our worthy friend was not unfrequently assailed on

this ground, as if he were hostile to every one who embarked in the missionary cause; but he was not only ready to give the right hand of fellowship to the humblest missionary, who shewed by his credentials that he was sent of God, but to bid him God speed! His soul was one with them, whom he considered in verity one with Christ.

It has also been stated, that he was hostile to the Bible Society. The Bible Society had for some time his fullest concurrence; but he saw human policy mingling in the stream of its public benevolence—an undue solicitude was shewn for the patronage of the great, and unwarrantable concessions made to the prejudices of the papists. He feared also, that much evil would arise in employing men who knew not the truth to be the translators, and by so much the interpreters of God's truth in another language. But he continued a regular subscriber, until it was discovered that the books of the Apocrypha had been intermingled with the word of God, and sold in this interpolated form by the agents of the Society. It is no more than honest to state, that their agents are now no longer countenanced in dispersing Bibles thus interpolated; but it is much to be lamented, that any copies of this description were ever sent forth into the world; for if men were not prepared to receive the pure word of God without this adulteration, they were not prepared to receive it at all.

At home among his family, in his parish, and in the military hospital, we have noticed the zeal of the exemplary Vicar of Charles, to make known the truths of the gospel, and to profit, if so it pleased the Lord, immortal souls. When called from home, the same hallowed principle evidenced itself in his unwearied labours and habitual readiness to avail himself of every opportunity to set forth the glory of a covenant God in Christ Jesus. Early in the year 1803, he repeated his visit to London, where he had been invited the year before to preach for the London Missionary Society. Sketches of this journey, interspersed with spiritual reflections, he soon after published.

" A man on earth devoted to the skies,
He sees with other eyes than ours; where we
Discern a sun, he spies a Deity;
What makes another smile, makes him adore." YOUNG.

In taking leave of his flock, on the Lord's day preceding his journey, he says, ' It was reserved for the moment of separation from the people of my charge to be made sensible how very closely both their persons and their everlasting interests had wrapped themselves about my heart. Five and twenty years of a feeble but affectionate ministry among them, and which never had before been interrupted by an absence equal to the one now intended (excepting only by sickness, and once on a similar errand), called up a variety of interesting images before me, and awakened every anxious concern.'—' Many affecting ideas crowded upon my mind, when, in the close of my evening lecture, I came to say, farewell: so that I could only tell them, how greatly " I longed after them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 8.'

During his absence for four Lord's days, he preached for no less than *eighteen* charitable institutions, at different churches, chiefly in the metropolis, to recommend which, he principally wrote his Journal; and including these, he delivered no less than *twenty-five* sermons. This was certainly aggravating the offence, which had awakened the careful jealousy of the vicar of Manaccan. From this time, he generally paid an annual visit to town, and his popularity increased with increasing years. When it was known that he was about to preach, the avenues around the churches were crowded to excess. I have heard some of the London clergy, who love the truth as it is in Jesus, say, ' we should be happy to open our pulpits to DR. HAWKER; but, when he preaches, our own congregations find not only their seats but the isles pre-occupied, so that they cannot get in, and the throng is sometimes so great as to do injury to the seats and benches. Sometimes even the rails have been broken down, and the doors unhinged.' I recollect his laconic

answer to one of them, who assured the Doctor, that this was the only cause why he did not venture to solicit him to preach —'What! are you afraid then to trust the Lord to make you amends?' But I am inclined to believe, that this was a greater objection in granting to him the use of the pulpit than any high standard of divinity, which he was known to maintain. Such indeed was the admiration in which his preaching was held by the religious public, not only for the peculiar flow of eloquence and chaste metaphors of illustration, with which his discourses were enriched; not only for the warmth of affection and energy of expression, with which they were delivered; but for the purity of doctrine and spirituality of sentiment, with which the whole came recommended to their hearts, that they offered to build or purchase an episcopal chapel for his sole use whenever he came to London; and they entertained no doubt that arrangements could be made for any clergyman, whom he might nominate to occupy it during his absence. His own son was mentioned as a suitable person to be the permanent minister. If emolument had been his aim, here was a favourable opening to benefit both himself and his family; but, no! he was content with the vicarage of Charles, and sought no other benefice. With his usual courtesy, he acknowledged the kindness of his friends, who had formed themselves into a provisional committee for the purpose; but he declined to sanction the measure, or to receive this token of friendship and esteem, which they so generously tendered him.

The honours and emoluments of this world was not the object he kept in view. In one of his journeys to town, one of the nobility at Bath, particularly requested an interview with him, which was granted; and as a mark of distinguished favour, which might have led to other considerations, he was personally solicited to accept a chaplain's scarf, and as a proof of the readiness and cordiality with which it was conferred, the necessary document was prepared free of all expense to him; but with equal courtesy, he

assured his noble friend, that he sought no other title or distinction than that of the Vicar of Charles; and, consequently, declined the intended honour.

Before we proceed, it will be well to call the attention of the reader to a custom which he adopted in all his journeys; and where the weight of character and the dignity of office will sanction the invitation, it may be adopted not only with propriety, but with success. 'It is my custom in travelling,'* saith he, 'to invite the master or mistress of the inn, at whose house I am, with as many of the family as feel disposed to join in the morning or evening worship. This was done with such happy consequences at Reading, (*i. e.* in his way to town) that in our return, there needed not the invitation to be repeated.' In his little tract, called 'The Traveller,' in which he gives the outlines of his manner of conducting worship at an inn, he saith, 'though I have sometimes, and not unfrequently, observed the alteration made upon the countenance of the waiter at the inn, in my proposal of prayer, yet such things have never discouraged me from constantly following up the invitation. On the contrary, by a firm and decided perseverence, I have in many places overcome all difficulty. Indeed now, from long custom, and especially in those inns, where from going more than once I am known, it is in some measure become habitual; and the inhabitants of those inns would, I believe, be disappointed were I to omit the invitation.' 'Who knows,' continues he, 'what hidden ones of the Lord may be in such a house? Who shall say, what blessed consequences shall follow? Let no man shrink from it. That sweet promise is absolute—" In due season ye shall reap, if we faint not."

From another clerical friend, I have heard the good effect of this practice. He was at a town in the north, at an inn, and sent an invitation to any of the family to join him and a brother clergyman in their morning devotions; but no one

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* Vol. VII. page 694.

attended, save a female servant, to whom they spake of the privilege of prayer and of the glorious things of Christ's kingdom. She pleaded, that she had no time for prayer! 'Surely,' said one of the clergymen, 'it would not take much time to bend the knee before the God of all grace, and say, *Lord, convert my soul!*' Some considerable time had elapsed before he visited the same place again, and on knocking at the door of the minister's house, who also preached the doctrines of the cross, he recognized on its being opened the servant who had on the occasion mentioned attended their morning worship at the inn. The Spirit of the Lord had so impressed the short prayer which he had suggested on her mind, that she could not forget it. *Lord, convert my soul!* was ofttimes in a day breathed in a sigh or mingled with a tear, till she felt and enjoyed the privileges of the gospel. She left the inn, and hired herself to the minister of the parish, that she might share in the privilege of morning and evening worship in his family. Thus the Lord works and accomplishes his purpose in a way that we know not.

In speaking of the reluctancy and aversion, which has been sometimes shewn in the features of a waiter at an inn, on the bare proposal of prayer, he mentions a striking instance of the same feeling which came under his own notice. 'Well do I remember,' saith he, 'in the family of one, who is now a peer of the realm, where the most sovereign contempt was manifested by a valet of the house to family worship. Not satisfied with constantly absenting himself upon those occasions when prayer was observed in the house, he proceeded to shew a yet more decided hatred to the service, and made a point to insult the whole of the family while at their devotions. For this purpose, he contrived to place himself in the adjoining room to the one in which they had assembled; and by noise in whistling, singing, and throwing about the furniture, as his corrupt humour directed him, to turn if he could the whole solemnity into ridicule. But without being supposed to know that this

conduct of his was designed, his master took occasion to enquire of him, how it was that he never attended family prayer. 'Prayer!' said he, and with the most impudent brow of scorn and derision, 'I never did live in a praying family, and never will.' 'True, my friend,' said the Doctor, in answer to what he heard, for he was present, 'you have for once spoken the truth. You never have known, it is plain by what you have said, what prayer is and the blessedness of it; and living and dying in this prayerless state, you never will. For in hell there are no prayers, and to that family you are hastening, and ere long will live in it for ever.'

This anecdote shows, that although he was indeed a Barnabas to the church, in administering consolation to the humble and contrite, yet he was a Boanerges to the ungodly, whose acts of audacity and impiety merited the severity of reproof. He knew how to rebuke sharply, and with all authority. Tit. i. 13. ii. 15.

In the year 1803, was also commenced the first volume of his 'Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible.' 'The idea,'* says one of the revicwers of this work, 'of publishing a Commentary on the Bible for the poor, and in so cheap a form (that is, in penny numbers), certainly does honour to the benevolence, as well as to the judgment of Dr. Hawker. The poor man, who either by his own industry or the benevolence of a friend, possesses that inestimable treasure, a Bible, and who is anxious to understand its sacred contents, and compare spiritual things with spiritual, will feel many obligations to this popular writer, whose plan comprises the following interesting particulars. 1. An introduction to every book, and a table of contents to each chapter. 2. References to other passages of scripture, by way of illustration, with occasional elucidations and remarks. 3. Reflections, at the close of each chapter, by way of improve

* Evan. Mag. 1803, page 309

ment. It was said of two celebrated commentators, Cocceius and Grotius, that the one found Christ everywhere, and the other nowhere. Dr. Hawker is of the former school, and Jesus is the name, which he everywhere "delighted to honour;" so much so, that we fear in some instances, he has overlooked the primary and literal sense to introduce allegories, which can hardly be justified. He writes, however, with great modesty, and the general design is so good, and its tendency so excellent, that we earnestly hope the author will be spared to prosecute his design, and that it may be a standing blessing to the church, especially to its poorer members.'

In this introduction, he reminds the reader of that which our Lord himself declared, John v. 46, "Moses wrote of me;" and charges him to place this motto by way of remembrance at the head of every book, and of every chapter of the writings of Moses.—"Moses wrote of Christ." From this unquestionable authority, he thinks we are warranted to say, whenever we open any of the writings of this distinguished servant of God, whether it be discovered by us or not, *Jesus is here.* In following up this impression, it may be admitted, that the ingenuity of his imagination has discovered some outlines of the profile of his all-glorious Lord, in passages and characters where a mind less fertile or excursive would never have sought him, which has brought him under the censure of some, who are too fastidious to admit, or too indolent to examine the authority of his argument. But is this the height of his offending?

> This his reproach! that his dear Lord he sought,
> In types obscure, where others ken him not;
> This his sole error!—Justice is suffic'd
> His very errors lead the soul to Christ.

As I shall have occasion to refer again to this voluminous work, I shall merely observe, that although for many years much of the time which he could spare from his parochial and other engagements was chiefly occupied in writing his

Commentary, yet other subjects occasionally and not unfrequently employed his pen.

In the ycar 1804, three small interesting tracts were sent to the press, 'The Brother born for Adversity,' 'The Friend that loveth at all Times,' and 'The Plant of Renown.' The design of the author was to exhibit to the youthful mind the Lord Jesus in all his loveliness; and in the contemplation of him under these characters, let the thoughtful youth say, Is there not somewhat in the very name of a brother, which tends to endear Jesus to the heart? And what friendship can there be so stable in its basis, or so promising in its results as the friendship of Jesus? And in all the science of botany, if such be his study, is there a plant so sweet, so verdant, so truly perennial, so rich in beauty, or so exuberant in fruitfulness, as to be compared with Him? 'Hail! thou eternal Plant of never-fading renown!' exclaims every believer, whose heart is in union with his who wrote this little tract, 'may my soul gaze for ever on thy beauties and live upon thy fulness—O be thou to me the sum and substance of all my joy in time and to all eternity.' Our worthy friend has shewn, by this little work, that he was no stranger to botany. 'Perhaps,' saith he, 'in the whole circle of sciences, none can be less exceptionable, because none is less harmless, than the study of the botanic garden; but even here, as in human life itself, so in this department of one of the principal sweeteners of life, a wintry dispensation must come, and, when it comes, it must invade and desolate the most promising prospects. But it is the prominent feature of him, who is the Plant of Renown, that amidst the perishing nature of all things around, "He is the same, and his years cannot fail." In the recollection of this, how doth all the loveliness of all earthly flowers languish, and the durableness of every perennial die away. Eden itself appears but a desert.'

In 1806, his 'Sailor Pilgrim' first made its appearance. It is drawn up much in the same manner as his *Zion's*

Pilgrim and *Zion's Warrior.* To give the three works a similarity of title, it may not be unfitly called *Zion's Mariner.* In the preface, he says, 'It will be very evident to the reader of discernment, that I have given scope to the imagination in the execution of my plan. Many fancied situations are figured in the history, which, without bordering on the improbable, may very fairly be supposed to have taken place in a sailor's life. I hope I do not err in this. The holy scriptures seem to authorize such plans of teaching. The prophets used similitudes, and the Lord of the prophets taught in parable. The reader is desired to recollect, that the Sailor Pilgrim is no other. Indeed, several of the events noticed in this little work, are taken from real life; but the great outline of the history is but fable.' In the second part of this work, which did not appear till 1809 there is a truly interesting anecdote given of N. Vincent, Esq., Admiral of the Red, which he states to have heard from the Admiral more than once, which is strikingly illustrative of the gracious providence of God.

In a work written purposely for seamen, which describes the life of one who knows what it is to conflict with other storms and tempests than those which agitate the unwieldy world of waters, it is natural to expect a reference to be made to the anchor of hope. The author of the Sailor Pilgrim has drawn a striking resemblance between the believer's and the sailor's anchor, yet shews, that in many instances the resemblance is lost. 'The one,' saith he, 'throws out his anchor to an uncertainty, it may or it may not find anchorage: but the other hath nothing doubtful. The sailor's hope may be frustrated, from many and various causes; the anchor itself, how strong soever, may break; the cable separate, let go its hold, or be itself snapped asunder, and the ship drive: but the sinner's can never give way; it is sure and stedfast, for it entereth within the vail; it rests, as the church itself doth, upon the Rock, its Almighty Founder, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against

it.'* But it is remarkable, that in a work of this nature, no reference is made to the mariner's compass or the polar star. Whether he considered them subjects too trite, or whether they escaped his recollection at the time of writing it, I know not; nevertheless, although these similes are not used or alluded to in all the work, as far as I have noticed, yet, is not Jesus the author's guiding star? And does he not assure us, though not couched under the same language, that even, when this star is from inward darkness not discoverable, there is an influence by far more attractive and mysterious, than that of the magnetic needle, which directs the steerage of every sailor pilgrim, embarked in the ark of the covenant, by its undeviating tendency to one grand centre of all spiritual polarity, (if I may so designate the Lord Jesus,) in whom all divine attractions concentrate, and our best wishes meet; I mean, the influence of the Holy Spirit, which not only directs his steerage, but draws the heart of every believer uniformly to Christ.

But this venerable *champion* of evangelical truth, (for such I do not hesitate to call him, although it has been appended to his name as a term of reproach,) was not permitted to remain long unmolested, in the tranquil enjoyment of winter's quarters. He, who had contended for the truth against a Porter and a Polwhele, had, in the year 1808, to enter the field against a Barrister, who had opened a masked battery upon him. His work was anonymous, entitled, 'Hints to the Public and the Legislature on the nature and effect of Evangelical Preaching.' In which he attempts to prove, or professes to shew, that evangelical preaching is the inlet of sin—that the doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness—that a system of morality is competent to the full correction of the minds and morals of men! As he had made the Doctor and his writings a target for his mark, upon whom, however, the strongest, keenest shaft which this forensic bowman could

* Vol. III. page 322.

send from his unvalorous covert, though drawn to the very barb, made no impression either to the wounding of his honour or his peace, the courteous Vicar of Charles immediately addressed to him a Letter, and expressed the obligations under which he was laid for the honorary distinction conferred upon him in this attack. 'There is, I confess, saith he, 'an awkwardness in addressing one that is unknown —but though I know not to whom I write, yet I well know *for* whom I write. In such a service, I feel a confidence too firmly grounded to shrink from abuse. I should pity indeed the man, who suffered even his haste to be impeded upon an errand of mercy, and much more, if he lost his temper, because some angry looker-on threw dirt at him as he passed.'*

After stating, that the general tenour of a man's life is the truest refutation of all anonymous calumny, he subjoins: 'It will not, I hope, be considered either unsuitable or unbecoming in me, (indeed it ought not upon an occasion like the present) if I contend for an honourable distinction of character equal with my censor, be who he may, in all the departments of moral, civil, and social life. And the jurors of my conduct, he himself shall impannel. You shall gather them, sir, if you please, from the common mass of all that know me. Neither will I challenge the restriction of them to such as have similar views of religion to myself; but let the whole, if you wish it, be selected from those who differ from me in sentiments of faith, but are disposed to give full testimony to exemplary practice. In the parish where I now dwell, and where the last *thirty years* of my life have been spent, I venture to take confidence, none can or will come forward to impeach a line of conduct, engaged for the most part in the humble and peaceable, but laborious office of a parochial minister.'†

'Is this appeal to an honourable reputation,' says the worthy Vicar, 'foreign to the modesty becoming me? Is

* Vol. IX. page 6. † Vol. IX. page 7.

it in any degree departing from my own principles of the fallen state of man? Far, very far from it. There is a wide distinction between our views of moral rectitude, in the comparative statements of human life, as they relate to man with man, and as that rectitude appears in the divine eye. When man stands opposed to man at this bar of judgment, good works may and indeed ought to be fully apprcciated. But when man stands at heaven's tribunal, herc, "all the world must become guilty before God." But the cause for which I address you, is not the defence of my character but my doctrine—every other consideration with me, is lost in this one.'* 'You say, that evangelical preaching is the great inlet to sin: it is to the want of it, that I ascribe the abounding of iuiquity. You contend, that the doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness: I assert, that it is that grace alone, which bringeth salvation, which can teach us, or when taught enable us, to practice the divine lessons of "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." In your calculation, a system of morality is competent to the full correction of the minds and manners of the people: according to my creed, nothing short of a change of heart can accomplish a reform.'†—'If, according to your apprehension of the persuasiveness of moral preaching, it is fully competent to induce a reform among all ranks and orders of people, will you or can you explain why it is that it should so uniformly fail of its end?'‡

'If you have candour, you must allow, that not all the eloquence of moral preaching, joined with all the eloquence of self-interest, and under circumstances the most promising from refinement and education, and circumstances at the same time the most alarming from the consideration of personal safcty; yet all unitedly taken together have not been found sufficient to give a new bias to the human heart, but have

* Vol. IX. page 9. † Vol IX. page 11. ‡ Vol IX. page 13.

lost their effect. I observe, from the portrait which you have drawn of human nature in the dark shades of it, the exercise of your pencil has been limited to the humbler walks of society. Was it, sir, because you could find no originals of real life to copy from of similar complexions among the higher order of the people? Surely you have read mankind to very little purpose, or rather, to no purpose at all, if you do not know, that the *historic gallery* of the nations, in the living and moving characters of it, could furnish you with as many and as highly finished subjects for the brush, among the great as among the small, and where the features of human depravity would appear full as large and prominent.'*

Thus the Doctor shews, by an appeal to existing circumstances, how universally prevalent is the spiritual disease of our nature, and that no moral preaching can effect its cure. From the quotations which the Barrister had made from Dr. Blair's Sermons, and the handsome terms in which he had spoken of him, it seemed to imply, that he was among his admirers. On which Dr. H. expresses his belief, 'that there are many who appreciate very highly the elegance of Dr. Blair as a writer, who have a sovereign contempt for his principles as a divine. I had the pleasure,' continues he, 'of Dr. Blair's correspondence before his death; and, I believe, was among the latest to whom he wrote. His creed and mine were not conformable to the same standard; but I have no right to feel displeasure on this account. The complexion of the mind, like the stature of the body, will vary; every man is not alike six feet high. His views of some of the grand distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, I have always admired.'—'In the first volume of his Sermons, on the subject of devotion, Dr. Blair thus delivers his faith on the doctrine of regeneration— 'The great Author of our religion, who 'well knew what was in man, laid the foundation of his whole

* Vol. IX. page 14.

'system, in the regeneration of the heart. The change which 'was to be accomplished on his followers, he did not purpose 'to effect merely by regulating their external conduct; but 'by forming within them a new nature, by taking away the 'heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh.' *

'Now, sir,' saith our venerable friend, in his appeal to the Barrister, 'from this striking passage in the Doctor's sermon, allow me to ask, did Dr. Blair believe in the doctrine of regeneration? If he did, (as who upon earth could question it, after so palpable a testimony from his own words) how can they who profess to shelter themselves under the Doctor's wing, deny the doctrine of regeneration, as if morality and not grace was the sole topic of his discourses?'

'In his second volume of Sermons, on the subject of the happiness of a future state, Dr. Blair thus expresses his ideas of the doctrine of the atonement:—'How are the robes of the blessed 'washed? Whence is derived that spotless purity in which 'they are arrayed? The Spirit of God has answered us; '"From the blood of the Lamb;" leading our thoughts to 'that high dispensation of mercy, to which the saints above 'owe their establishment, first in grace and then in glory. 'From that blood which "was shed for the remission of sins," 'flow both the atonement of human guilt, and the regenera-'tion of human nature." 'Now, sir, from this specimen of Dr. Blair's belief in the great doctrine of *the atonement*, as well as from what was reviewed before concerning his sentiments on that of *regeneration*, suffer me to ask,' says the worthy Vicar of Charles, 'had the Doctor lived to the present hour, would he have thought an apology necessary for evangelical preaching?'

The pains which our worthy friend takes to defend the character of Dr. Blair from being ranked among the mere moral preachers, (though it is to be wished, that his evangelical principles had been more conspicuous in his writings,)

* Vol. IX. page 20.

is highly creditable; when it is considered that the Edinburgh divine was among the first to honour him with the diploma of Doctor in Divinity, for his Sermons on the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in writing this Memoir, I could not omit copying these quotations, and Dr. Hawker's remarks thereon, to give a prominency to this noble trait in his character. He knew how to requite a kindness in a friend, and to vindicate his honour.

In consequence of several distressing cases which came under his notice in his usual occupation of visiting the sick, where he found a more than ordinary apprehension of mind, lest their situation by reason of sin had precluded them from the hope of mercy; for the relief of such mental maladies, he published a little work, entitled, '*A Prop against all Despair*, intended for the consolation of self-condemned sinners in general, but more especially for those perishing souls who fear they have sinned against the possibility of pardon.' This little book the writer of this Memoir has found useful to characters of this description, and more especially the doctrines contained therein, not only in cheering the prospects of the dying, but in removing the doubts of the desponding. And there is no doubt, but many ministers are able to bear the same testimony in its favour. Both Mr. Polwhele and the Barrister enter their protest against it; but in the vicissitudes of life, men have been brought to feel the need of those very props, which they in their self-confidence have previously despised.

'In the representation you have made,' saith the Doctor to the Barrister, 'of my writings to the public and the legislature, (from what motive I leave you to determine) you have endeavoured to blacken my character, as if the magistrate's authority would be incompetent to keep due order in the metropolis, while my publications are suffered to be circulated.' After having, in self-defence, shewn for whom the book was designed, and with what object it was written, that is, to enquire whether there be not, under divine grace, a

sufficient prop found in the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God, to stay up the hopes of every poor perishing and self-despairing sinner, the Doctor presses the question—'Now. sir, suffer me to ask, how could you, under all the fine impressions you profess to feel of the love of God, and of the love of your neighbours in your heart, and with the full prospect of heaven in your view from keeping the commandments, and standing pre-eminent in the practice of all moral duties, how could you venture to tell the public and the legislature what you have respecting this little book of mine?"* The sum of which accusation was, that it gave permission, yea, encouragement to add sin to sin.

The Barrister's want of candour and fairness in thus misrepresenting the truth, was only commensurate with his ignorance of scripture, which he betrays in his attack on the Rev. Mr. Toplady. 'So little acquainted are you with the word of God,' says the Doctor, 'that you have literally taken a passage in Toplady's sermon, which he had made use of from Paul's second epistle to Timothy, (chap. i. ver. 9.) and from this presumptuous conclusion in your own mind, you have presumptuously said, if this be the doctrine of the true gospel, then the new testament cannot be the true gospel."† O that men would read their Bibles with more attention, before they pretend to be the censors of others, or undertake to decide what is truth!

The conclusion of this letter is grand and affecting; and although I have quoted so much, to give the reader a fair view of the controversy, I hope to meet his indulgence in making another brief extract.—'If the change,' saith he, 'you seem so much to wish for was once to take place, if evangelical doctrines were driven out, and moral essays only to supply their room, doth it not strike you, that such duplicity between our articles and such preaching must sooner or later call down the divine displeasure. "The

* Vol. IX. page 31 † Vol. IX. page 33.

blood of souls (saith God by his servant the prophet) will I require at your hands." 'Which,' saith Chrysostom, 'are thunderbolts, and not words.' And if the right-aiming thunderbolts of God should once be sent abroad in this visitation, it doth not require the spirit of prophecy surely to foretell the fire will be awful. The venerable turrets of our churches, which rise to the clouds, will not be able to resist the lightning with which they are charged. In vain doth the cross stand as an electrical conductor on the dome of St. Paul's, if the preaching of the cross be not held within. Nothing but the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the houses restrained the distroying angel from entering.'*

In the first pamphlet, the Barrister from appearing to be a friend to the established church, threw a disguise over his own real creed; but in his *second*, he betrayed a socinian sibboleth. The Doctor, from certain expressions, suspected the unsoundness of his faith in this particular; charged him in this *second* reply with being a follower of Socinus, confessing himself, at the same time, ready to retract the charge with pleasure, if the Barrister would briefly say in his next pamphlet, that he believed in the Godhead of Christ. A third book of *the Hints* has since appeared, in which the Barrister notices the Doctor's second letter, but not the challenge therein sent him.

In the commencement of this second letter, in answer to the Barrister's second pamphlet of 'Hints,' the Doctor says, 'I have this moment heard the *second* blast of your horn, and hasten to meet you in the field of battle. And now you no longer appear in a questionable shape, which you assumed in your former controversy, I no longer feel the embarrassment I then laboured under, from an unconsciousness in what character I had to approach you. Indeed, as I now and then glanced your armour, I thought, (but I rather wished to suppress than to encourage the idea) that I

* Vol. IX page 35,

espied the arrow of heresy in your quiver.'[a] 'And while you are engaged in your way (saith he, in another page) in *dissecting* with attention, as you term it, the *body* of evangelical doctrine, I hope that I may be indulged in mine, in *lecturing* with equal freedom on the *skeleton* of unitarianism.'[b]

In this second letter, the Doctor recapitulates the substance of his former one under distinct heads, to shew that he had already met several charges, which the Barrister boldly and unwarrantably asserts he had not noticed. In the latter part thereof, he justifies his doctrines from the clear and express language of the church of England, in her truly scriptural articles, and strongly marks the absurdity of the Barrister, in impeaching him for his faithful adherence to the very doctrines, which by law and conscience he was bound to maintain. 'Here is a man,' saith the Doctor, 'who comes forward with unblushing confidence to impugn a minister of the establishment, for preaching the very doctrines which the law itself hath appointed, and which, at his ordination, the accused was set apart to support. And this man not only comes forward to criminate on this ground, but actually calls upon the legislature to devise some method for putting a stop to the propagation of those very truths, which that legislature hath in its wisdom for many successive generations established. Such an attempt forms an outrage, not only upon common law, but common sense. It is a phenomenon in history reserved for the opening of the nineteenth century.'[c]

In the *third* pamphlet, the Barrister speaks of approaching the Doctor with respect, after all the contumely which he had so profusely heaped upon him; but intimates, that it was his profession, and not his abilities, that had this claim upon him. But it is doubtful, if he had not smarted from his superior abilities, whether he had ever paid homage to his profession, as a minister of that faith, which, if honest, he

[a] Vol. IX. page 37. [b] Vol. IX. page 40. [c] Vol. IX. page 72.

must have wished to annihilate. As the Doctor had pledged in his second letter, that until his opponent had filled as many pamphlets as he had already filled pages, he would continue to follow him up, step by step, he published a *third* letter, in answer to the third book of *Hints:* in which, he introduced lectures on unitarianism, together with a comparative view of the similarity in the principles of the unitarian faith and Mahometanism.

In this controversy, we see gracefully blended in all his conduct, qualities which rarely meet, or when combined, like precious stones of different colour in the same golden ouche, set forth each other by a variety of lustre—the dignified courtesy of the gentleman, with the deep humility of the christian; the patient forbearance of the injured minister, with the skilful swordmanship and home-thrust of the polemical divine. He has indubitably shewn, that his weapons were not carnal; and after having laid his antagonist low, stripped his quiver, and broken every shaft, he bends over him, not with a shout of triumph, but in the attitude of prayer for his fallen adversary; and thus closes a contest never to be renewed again by the same combatants in this world, nor submitted to any court of decision, till opened in a court from which there is no appeal, before the Almighty Judge of quick and dead, at the last audit of all human causes. 'God, in mercy grant, if it be his holy will,' saith this special christian pleader for his very accuser, 'that it may be said of you, concerning your present contempt of Christ, as Peter had in commission to tell the Jews; "I wot," said he, "brethren, that through ignorance ye did it," Acts iii. 17. And much would it rejoice my heart, if God should grant repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, in the instance of many an unitarian beside yourself, that you might be recovered out of the snare of "the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will,"[a] 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

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[a] Vol. IX. page 171.

It is not without design, that I have omitted to notice in their proper place, as to chronological order, several small publications of our beloved friend, and to defer it till this period of his history, that I might whilst noticing them meet some unjust remarks made upon them in the Christian Observer; and made at a time when it appeared in some measure to be siding with an avowed opponent of evangelical preaching. As I before observed, the unitarian Barrister had entered his protest against the Doctor's little work, 'a Prop against all Despair.' The cause is obvious. The chief remedy therein prescribed is brought from doctrines which the socinians vilify and deny. But in the review of the Barrister and others on evangelical preaching, which appeared in the Christian Observer, for June, 1809, it is said, that 'Dr. HAWKER in this work exalts the doctrine, "that all sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men," at the expense of this doctrine, "that without holiness no man shall see the Lord."' 'At the expense of this doctrine!' Has the Doctor then in this work invalidated this doctrine? Does he not call it in the preface a *horrible* maxim, "to continue in sin that grace may abound?" Does he not, in the work itself, call the attention of the reader to this distinguishing property of the everlasting covenant, "I will put *my fear* in their heart, that they shall not depart from me?" Doth he not teach, how earnestly he should pray for grace to be a *follower* of them, "who now through *faith* and *patience* inherit the promises?" Doth he not immediately subjoin the prayer, that such a one may be "faithful unto death?" After enumerating the black list of awful characters mentioned by the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. doth he not remind his reader of the change they underwent, by following up the quotation, "But ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?" Was he not professedly speaking to such poor perishing sinners as fear they have sinned beyond the hope of mercy? And is not the sum and substance of the whole

work comprised in the apostle's exhortation to the trembling jailor—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?" Did he not guard his doctrine by requesting the reader, before he entered on the perusal of this little treatise, to ask his heart—'Am I really awakened under a solemn conviction of my sin and depravity, to an anxious concern for salvation; *and is sin become my greatest burden, and a deliverance from it my first and most earnest desire?*'

Yet all this will not satisfy the querulous reviewer. 'This preparatory question,' saith he, 'should have been pressed home more strongly.' As if it were to be done by mere strength of argument, forgetting the words of the prophet, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord!" 'The sinner,' he adds, 'should have been cautioned, before he *applied to himself* the consolations of the gospel, to examine whether he really *hated* sin as an offence against God, or whether he only *dreaded* it as bringing down punishment on himself.' Surely all this is fully implied and understood in the preparatory question; but here again, in the use of the unscriptural phrase, of *applying to himself* the consolations of the gospel, the reviewer seems to forget what the Lord hath said, "I wound, and I *heal*:" and although the apostle speaks of administering comfort to others, it is said to be "with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted *of God*," 1 Cor. i. 4. It is the prerogative of the Holy Ghost, and his only; all without him are comforters of no value. 'He should also have been warned,' continues he, 'that he must, should his life be prolonged, devote that life to the service of God, and by his zeal for good works, and his practice of holiness, prove his faith genuine, his repentance sincere, his gratitude to Christ that died for him warm and active.' (Oh! how much of self-sufficiency is there in all this!) 'Of all this, however, we find nothing,' saith he, 'in this Prop against all Despair!'

But I would ask, with all deference and humility, would it be judicious, would it be seasonable, to give such cautions

and warnings as these, at a time when a man is supposed to be verging to despair? As well might the sage reviewer, if present, have taken the apostle by the elbow, when administering consolation to the trembling jailor, and have whispered — press home more strongly some preparatory question; he should have been cautioned before this to examine himself from whence his terror arises; he should have been also warned, that he must, should his life be prolonged, devote that life to the service of God, and so forth. Of all this, however, we find nothing in the apostle's admonition to the trembling jailor!

The worthy Doctor, in reference to David's plea with God, expressed in the 25th Psalm, "For thy name's sake, O God, be merciful unto my sin, *for it is* GREAT;" well observes, that 'this kind of arguing, were it made among men, would be considered strange indeed; for we use the very reverse. It is the common maxim to endeavour to extenuate the offence by pleading the never having done it before, and the hope of not falling into it again. But with God the plea differs. (As much as to say, we dare not plead their littleness, but we plead the need of his mercy from their greatness.) The greatness of our sin pleads with the greatness of divine mercy. "Deep calleth upon deep."'[a] 'At such language,' the reviewer adds, '*we really shudder*. And this from a fear, lest many should conclude from this language, that they ought to continue in sin that grace may abound.' As well might they shudder at the apostle's language, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

But it is much more shuddering to the poor despairing sinner to be told, that he *must* do this and *must* do that, without informing him from whence he is to have help or strength; that the Lord hath assured us, that his grace is all-sufficient; that as our day is so our strength shall be; that the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities; that our heavenly

[a] Vol. IV. page 396.

Father will, with every temptation, make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it; that he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Of all this, however, we find nothing in the amendment suggested by the reviewer, as to the Prop against all Despair!

In a tract, entitled, 'Solemn Questions for Members of the Church of England,' published in 1798, will be found this sentence: 'I shall not declaim on the moral excellence of human nature, while our church prayers with one voice continually declare, we have no health, no excellence in us; neither shall I recommend, that human strength be exerted in acts of moral virtue *to procure our salvation*, while the same form of worship solemnly assures us, that in God alone is our help found.'[a] This is made the subject of animadversion by the Barrister. 'We do not fully understand,' saith the same reviewer, 'what vindication Dr. Collyer meant to suggest for this passage, by printing these four words in italics, *towards their own salvation*,' for thus the Barrister had altered them. But I would ask the reviewer, is it not plain, that though all our powers may be exerted to serve and praise the Lord, and to evidence our faith and love, when quickened to newness of life by the Holy Spirit, yet nothing of this is done, or can be done *to procure our salvation*, or *towards our salvation*, much less mere acts of moral virtue, which have all of them the nature of sin, if produced by mere exertion of human strength, and not done in faith; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. xiv. 23. See also what the thirteenth article of our church maintains on this point. The faithful and laborious Vicar of Charles has suffered much in his character from ignorant, injudicious, and prejudiced reviewers. How far they have impeded his usefulness will be determined at the last day!

In 1803, was published a small pamphlet, denominated,

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[a] Vol. X. page 219.

'The Spirit's Work in the Heart, the great Witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, a small token of affection to the Church of Christ.' By one or two quotations, the reader may have some general idea of this little treatise. 'It is the work,' saith he, 'of the blessed Spirit, by his quickening power, to impart the first principles of the new life in the soul. To him also it belongs to accomplish on the soul that act of grace, whereby we are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And it is his work no less, to separate from the original stock of a corrupt nature, and to unite the soul by a living union to the person of Christ Jesus, as the spiritual Head of his people.'[a] As one of the evidences of being taught of the Spirit, he saith, '"If so be you have so learned Christ, and have been taught by him," then have ye, as the apostle describes it, "put off concerning the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and are renewed in the spirit of your mind, and have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."'[b] He then subjoins: 'What know you of these things? Depend upon it, if God the Spirit hath been your Master, in the divine science, then hath he taught you these practical and experimental lessons: for his instructions carry with them so many distinguishing properties, and are followed with such soul-transforming effects, that it is impossible to mistake them.' Is there nothing of sanctification in all this? Yet the reviewer, in the Christian Observer, tells the religious world, that 'in a tract, entitled, 'The Spirit's Work on the Heart,' Dr. Hawker has said *nothing* on the doctrine of sanctification by the influence of the Spirit, and states that his mode of teaching has a dangerous tendency to encourage antinomianism!' The reviewer might as well say, that in the epistle to the Ephesians, (from which the above quotation is made), and in several other epistles, the apostle Paul

[a] Vol. IV. page 419. [b] Vol. IV. page 423.

has said nothing on the doctrine of sanctification by the influence of the Spirit, because in these epistles the word *sanctification* is not found; or that the inspired writers have said nothing of *happiness*, as it regards this world or the next, because the word *happiness* is not to be found in all the Bible! Can sanctification be more scripturally defined, than by the verses quoted by the Doctor from the epistle to the Ephesians? Or can the subject be pressed home more strongly, (to use the reviewer's own phrase) than is done in the above quotation taken from the Doctor's pamphlet? How must it have grieved this good man's heart to see his writings thus misrepresented, and the truth perverted!

In 1799, he sent to the press a little work, entitled, 'Union with Christ, the only possible means of enjoying Communion with God, or an answer to that interesting question, What is the truest preparation in those who come to the Lord's Supper?' 'In this tract,' says our christian reviewer, '*not a word* is said in favour of *holiness*, as a fit preparation for a communicant.' How can this assertion be justified? On the very title-page, is it not set forth as the leading feature of the work, that there is no possible means of enjoying communion with God, without an union with Christ; and that this union with Christ is the truest preparation in those who communicate at the Lord's table? Now, permit me to ask, can there be an union with Christ without holiness? Is there then in this tract, *not a word* said in favour of holiness, as a fit preparation for a communicant? Are we not greeted with it at the very threshold? Or does the reviewer pretend to maintain, that there can be an union with Christ without the Spirit of holiness resting upon us or abiding in us? Who knows how far the sale and usefulness of these excellent tracts have been prevented by these misrepresentations and false colourings? I will not say, that this was done intentionally, but surely it behoves a reviewer professing godliness to examine and weigh every sentence before he makes assertions so distorted from the straight line of truth and

integrity. If the thing be expressed, yet not in the very terms which the reviewer would have adopted; or if it be not expressed, but merely implied, and implied only in a single word, it cannot be true, that there is *not a word* in all the work in favour of the thing in debate.

The Doctor, in this little treatise, animadverts on the folly and inconsistency of what is called a *week's* preparation for the Lord's Supper. As if a week's abstinence from business or pleasure, to which the heart is wedded all the while, could beget a divorce; or a week's hurrying over a few unfelt prayers, could bring the soul nearer to God. 'Perhaps,' subjoins he, 'while I am shewing the fallacy of what is called *a weekly preparation*, I shall be misconstrued, as if I discountenanced *all* preparation whatever. But this is far from my design; and the man of candour and sincerity will not, I am persuaded, be under the influence of such a persuasion. I do indeed desire to be understood, as very highly reprobating that preparation which is in *man*, because I learn from an authority not to be questioned, that "the preparation of the heart is from the Lord." And hence I earnestly desire to recommend to every sincere worshipper to seek the Lord's face in the Lord's strength.'[a] He also proves, 'both the importance of a personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ, as forming an *habitual* preparation for the purpose of enjoying real communion with God; and that the *actual* preparation is in the blessed Spirit's work also, in exciting grace in the heart, and calling forth the exercise of it, in every single act of prayer, or praise, or faith, or repentance.'[b] Yet *in this habitual and actual preparation wrought in Christ, and through the Holy Ghost*, according to this reviewer, there is not a word said in favour of holiness as a fit preparation for a communicant! Not a word indeed in favour of a pharisaical holiness, which rests in mere form; but a holiness breathed into the soul by the Holy Ghost, evidenced in "*self-*

[a] Vol. II. page 310. [b] Vol. II. page 319.

humbling, *self-loathing*, and *self-abhorrence* before the mercy-seat; and the blessed Spirit ultimately produces those effects, in which David exults, when he says, "O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; for I will yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God," Ps. xliii. 3, 4, 5.[a]

In the year 1809, 'An Address on the Dangerous Tendency of the London Female Penitentiary,' was published by William Hale, Esq. a gentleman, 'whose exertions and success in counteracting many evils in one of the most populous parishes in the metropolis, are said to have given him strong claims on the attention and respect of true patriots and christians.'[b] But why an attack should have been made on this Penitentiary particularly, rather than on the Magdalene Asylum, does not at least to me clearly appear. The very decided part which Dr. Hawker had taken in promoting the interest of the institution, (for his heart was overflowing with benevolence, through the riches of divine grace bestowed upon him,) induced him to meet the objections, in a Letter to this gentleman, by way of answer. On taking a distinct and leisurely survey of the Penitentiary, which he visited in person, he gave his decided opinion, that it merited the fullest encouragement; for Mr. Hale had stated, that he thought the workhouse the best school of reform for such persons. 'The exercise of a parochial ministry,' saith the Doctor, 'in a town like Plymouth, for thirty years; and where, for obvious reasons, a very numerous body of these wretched women abound, may be supposed to have made me painfully conversant with their sad history. I have been in the constant habit of visiting the sick and dying chambers of such characters, equally perhaps to any minister whatever; and it may be reasonably supposed in such a school,

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[a] Vol. II. page 314.

[b] Evan. Mag. 1812, page 282.

that the science of their misery, with the best probable means of relief, might be learnt.'[a] And with the observations which he had made, he hesitated not to conclude, that a penitentiary, and not a workhouse, is the best suited to the recovery of such characters.

From a conviction of the utility of an asylum of this description for such poor creatures as wished to leave their evil courses, and to be restored to a reputable sphere in society, he had long wished to establish a Penitentiary at Plymouth, which from his indefatigable zeal and perseverance was carried into effect in the year 1808. The utility of such an institution appeared more evident, from a circumstance which occurred about that period. One lovely morning, as the sun shone with all its usual benignity, he was ruminating upon the probable multitudes, amidst the head-aches and heart-aches with which the world was teeming, to whose languid and sorrowful eye the gladdening rays of the sun had lost their brightness; when a poor woman in deep distress came to his door, and sought his advice and assistance. She was a poor defenceless widow, the mother of an only daughter. Her child had been seduced from her, even before she had the consciousness of any danger, and for *fifteen* months she had not only lost her, but notwithstanding all the vigilance of the most anxious enquiry, no traces could be found to discover her abode among any of the haunts of sin and wretchedness. On the very morning, a letter sent from the poor deluded young creature herself, gave the first information where she was, with an account of her dejection and wretchedness. In the first impulse of the moment, the distracted mother ran with the tidings to her minister; but her fear was, that the persons who kept the house would not admit her to see her daughter. The benevolent pastor consented to accompany her to fetch home the wretched wanderer.

'I hastened,' saith he,[b] 'with the poor mother to the place

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[a] Vol. IX. page 177.

[b] Vol. X. page 345.

mentioned in her daughter's letter; and Oh! what a place it was! The very atmosphere of the place seemed contaminated—several of the ruined inhabitants passed before me, as I went through one of the apartments. It is a circumstance perhaps but little known, but yet too true, that by far the greater part of those miserable outcasts of society, die at an earlier period, than that in which multitudes begin to enter life. We at length arrived (the poor afflicted mother and myself) at the sick room of her poor child. Her sickness preyed upon her too much to leave her alive to the full feelings, which her mother's presence and her own conscious heart would no doubt otherwise have called forth. Tenderness and affection on the part of the poor old woman was all that in the present state could be shewn; and the object I had to accomplish, was to adopt the speediest method for her removal. But it was impossible in rescuing one unhappy female from such a state of complicated misery, to behold the many left behind to perish; nay, to recollect the thousands continually hurried into this whirlpool of iniquity, but with the most painful sensation. The asylum for the reception of such poor deluded outcasts appeared in all its loveliness to my mind! Indeed, it were most devoutly to be wished, that its ability of admission within its hospitable walls were equal to all the wants of the multitudes that are perishing without; and like the city of the ransomed which is above, the asylum of the miserable below had *the gates of it never shut day nor night.*'

The interesting circumstances attending the restoration of this poor young creature to her mother, was made the subject of a tract, which first appeared in the Evangelical Magazine for September, 1808. This tract arrested the attention of Mr. Hale, who concluded that it was written in recommendation of the *Pentonville* Penitentiary; for he knew nothing of the asylum then forming and afterwards established at *Plymouth*. It will not be unacceptable to the readers of this Memoir to be told the sequel of this poor

girl's history. It could not be recorded when the tract was first published, because the subsequent event had not taken place. But when the Doctor wrote to Mr. Hale, the daughter, recovered by divine grace to a state of penitence and reform, was living with her mother, and maintaining herself by her labours, in honest and virtuous poverty.[a]

Sweet and pathetic are the verses which accompanied the account of this young female, entitled, '*The Magdalene.*'[b] It is by far the best of his poetical productions. It was also set to music by the author.

" The child of sin and woe,
Ah! whither shall I flee?
To what kind bosom go
To tell my misery?
For none will see
But all agree
To frown on me—
A MAGDALENE!

" My father!—Ah! no more
His home or love I know;
He spurn'd me from his door,
And gave me up to woe!
He'll not relent,
Though penitent,
My heart is bent—
A MAGDALENE!

" The grave—the only end
To sorrow's heavy load!
Death is indeed a friend
To them at peace with God!
But grace must be
First given, and free;
There's none for me—
A MAGDALENE!

" I've heard of Jesu's name,
Who on the gospel day,
Received all that came,
Nor turned a wretch away.
Though all forbear
Will Jesus hear
In earnest prayer—
A MAGDALENE?

" Methinks I feel a ray
Of hope arising round;
Some angel points the way—
'Here's an asylum found!'
What's this I see?
And can it be
Inviting me—
A MAGDALENE!

" And will you, can you take
A wretch like me within?
Will you for Jesu's sake,
Help me to flee from sin?
Oh! love divine!
For grace to shine
On guilt like mine—
A MAGDALENE!

" Here then in this retreat,
My soul shall wait and pray;
Nor rise from Jesu's feet,
Till sin be put away.
Jesus will hear
And answer prayer;
And say, 'lo here—
A MAGDALENE!"

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[a] Vol. IX. page 180.

[b] Vol. X. page 772.

Mr. Hale's views were, that the London Penitentiary (and consequently, every other penitentiary of the same description) would ultimately disappoint the expectations of its supporters; that the results of its operations would never lessen, but increase the sum of prostitution; and that the measure adopted cannot be supported by precept or example from the word of God. But surely the inn to which the good Samaritan brought the wounded and despoiled traveller, may be a sufficient precedent, in scripture, for providing a house of mercy for the penitent Magdalene, who has been despoiled of all that is valuable, wounded in her conscience, and left more than half dead! As to Mr. Hale's first proposition, since it rested wholly on conjecture, it was consequently unfounded and premature, but subsequent results have manifested its utility: nor is this the only one, where females of this degraded cast have entered ignorant of their alphabet, destitute of any knowledge how by honest labour to earn their bread, and by no means inured to habits of industry; yet, when they have left, they have known how to read their Bible, how to earn their bread honestly, and have conformed themselves to industrious habits.

When Dr. Hawker visited the London Penitentiary, it was the custom of the matron to direct her charge to make their own observations in writing, on the progress of their own improvement under the ministry of the word. A book was found lying on the table in their work-room, which the women had just left, to make vacant for the entrance of himself and friends who accompanied him thither. He was so struck with the sentiments expressed by one of them in this book, that, he tells us, he could not resist the importunity of copying them in his pocket-book. They were *verbatim* as follows:

'*Nov.* 21.—I feel my soul exceedingly sad, when I reflect on the strong resentment I yet feel against those who have bitterly injured me; and that, in spite of my resolves, the least circumstance which appears unpleasant to me, rouses

my ill-suppressed anger, and in my heart I sometimes curse the author of my wretchedness. How dare I then presumptuously suppose my heart softened, and more alive to the blessed truths I hear, when I, who stand so much in need of forgiveness from a Being of infinite perfection, against whom I have sinned with impunity, feel a reluctance to pardon a fellow-creature, whose offences against me are venial, compared with mine towards God!'

The Doctor justly concludes, 'that the writer of such sentiments would be too susceptible of feeling to go to a parish officer for admission into a workhouse, to seek through that medium a restoration to virtuous society. And is it not to be supposed, that among the great mass of twenty thousand females, which, it is said, infest the streets of the metropolis by night for the purposes of seduction, there are many equally capable of thinking?—many whose feelings and conduct equally correspond?'[a]—'many such brought into the asylum, have given testimony of a change of heart as well as a change of conduct in their deportment. Many a tear falls from those eyes which before were full of lasciviousness and uncleanness; and many an hallelujah now drops from the lips, in praises to God and the Lamb, which but a short space since were used in profaneness.'[b]

'Since,' saith the Doctor to Mr. Hale, 'I sat down to write this letter to you, I have been called upon to visit a poor broken-hearted female of this description, not that she needed money, neither stood in want for the supply of the body; but she wanted to return to the nurturing nest of a fond mother, from whose cherishing wings she had been decoyed, by the syren song of one who lay in wait to deceive, and at the age of *seventeen* fell into the net of the spoiler! Should I have said, when sent for to such an interesting case of misery, let her go to the parish officer? Her parents' house was but within five miles of my own, and,

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[a] Vol. IX. page 191.

[b] Vol. IX. page 192.

through the help of a kind friend, who is always alive to offices of philanthropy, the business was not suffered to rest until the poor fugitive was safely lodged under the tender covering from which she had fled. Indeed so far is poverty from being the universal motive, in prompting these miserable creatures to seek a shelter from their calamity, that I venture to believe it is not so very common a case as is supposed. It is but a few weeks past that one applied to be taken into the Plymouth Asylum for no motive whatever but to get free from this horrible way of life, as herself termed it, into which she had fallen. 'I do not want money,' said the poor young creature to a lady of the committee to whom she applied, 'for I have six pounds in my pocket, and need no clothes, but I want to be delivered from a life of such misery.' "[a]

Speaking more particularly of the Plymouth Asylum, he says, '*Early in the last year* this charity opened. From the period of its institution to the present hour, *twenty-three* of these outcasts of society have been received into it. Of that number *two* are already gone into service, having for some time given proof of exemplary behaviour. The families who received them are known to be pious families, and the heads of those families were well acquainted with the character of these poor creatures whom they received in among them; and I have the pleasure to add, that every report concerning their conduct, since their departure from the Asylum, tends more and more to confirm the hope, that a thorough change of mind and manners hath taken place upon them. *One* died in the Asylum, concerning whom there was the highest reason to believe that her end was peace. *One* is returned to her friends, with whom a happy reconciliation had been effected, previous to her leaving the Asylum. And of those who now remain in the house, from the matron's report, it appears, that several are under truly serious impressions."[b]

Surely all this shews, that such institutions are not and

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[a] Vol. IX. page 194.

[b] Vol. IX. page 197.

cannot be of a dangerous tendency; neither would it be adviseable to send a poor broken-hearted penitent to a parish officer for relief, when she rather sought relief for her mind than maintenance for her body. In reference to parochial relief, he strongly recommends one general national fund to be made for the support of the poor. '*Let there be*,' saith he, '*but one parish of the whole kingdom, considered as to the poor. In all other parochial concerns, the present distinction of bounds and interests should continue.* Then, farewell vexatious law-suits between parish and parish, in determining the poor man's settlement! Farewell for ever to the heart-breaking business of removing numberless poor families in old age to their home! Farewell the sad tales of sending vagrants, from tithing to tithing, &c.! And a long farewell to the drains made on the poor's purse for law-suits, and a long train of *et ceteras*, by which many score thousands are annually spent!'[a]

'Though I am no lawyer,' saith he, 'nor have served in a parish office, yet painful necessity hath made me an experienced practitioner in both, as far as the poor laws are concerned. Many hundreds of letters have I written to the various parishes of the kingdom, in a way of petition, respecting their wandering poor, whose husbands or whose children have brought them to Plymouth in hopes of seeing them. No situation, for very obvious reasons, can furnish out more melancholy instances of this kind; and many, I fear, in the event of want, have pined away in secret rather than make their cases known.'[b] All this shews how many and varied must have been his parochial and casual duties, in addition to the many publications in which he was engaged. His kindness and condescension to the poor, in hearing with patience their tale of woe, in relieving the present pressure of want, or in promoting their interests or that of their children, in a vast variety of instances, have embalmed his name

[a] Vol. IX. page 211.

[b] Vol. IX. page 210.

in their memories and endeared it to their hearts. What he says of the Penitentiary, I believe, may be applicable to his feelings for the poor in general. 'If the resources proved insufficient to supply the daily bread for the household,—looking up to Him who hath promised, that bread should be given and water should be sure, I would go forth in his name to seek it from every quarter; and when I had drained every resource, and tired by my importunity every heart; though the fig-tree ceased to blossom, and there remained no fruit in the vine, still my confidence should not be shaken; but I would, as the prophet did, look to the Lord, and hope in the God of my salvation. I would return to him in whose name I had gone forth, present in the arms of my faith the poor Penitentiary, with all its inhabitants, and say, Shall any of those perish for whom Christ died?'[a]

The Plymouth Penitentiary has, however, for some time, been relinquished. During the late war, there are obvious reasons why such an asylum was more needed. As it was the constant rendezvous of so many thousands for the purposes of defence or embarkation, thither also were drawn a large number of these unhappy females; but since the war, the Exeter Penitentiary, as a county asylum, has been considered sufficient for their reception. Although it has been published, with the Doctor's Letter to Mr. Hale, the reader, who has met with it there, will pardon the introduction of a copy of verses, which, I understand, was composed by a reclaimed Magdalene.

From the Penitents of the Probationary Ward of Pentonville Penitentiary, to Dr. Hawker,

ONE OF THE BENEVOLENT FOUNDERS OF THE PLYMOUTH PENITENTIARY.

" My feeble muse essays to sing
From gratitude what feelings spring!
Friend of the needy and oppress'd,
Whose liberal hand and gen'rous breast

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[a] Vol. IX. page 214.

To the poor mourner yields relief,
And from the bosom chases grief;
Tells them that Jesus will forgive,
And bid us guilty sinners live;
Live to express his wond'rous pow'r,
That sav'd them in the trying hour.
When dark despair their minds assail'd,
And sin and Satan near prevail'd;
Poor midnight wanderers for bread,
Who knew not where to lay their head!
For these thy care provides a home,
And thither bids the wanderers come;
Teaches their souls the way to heav'n,
And bids them hope their sins forgiv'n.
Exalted, noble, generous man,
Oh! yet pursue thy God-like plan!
And still our daily prayers shall rise
To heav'n a pleasing sacrifice;
That when thy work on earth is done,
Jesus may all thy labours crown!"

December 20, 1808.

Although often engaged in controversial subjects, he still continued to proceed with the publication of his 'Poor Man's Commentary:' and in the year 1810, was sent to the press, 'The Poor Man's Morning Portion;' to which soon followed, 'The Poor Man's Evening Portion;' being selections of a verse of scripture, with short observations, for every day in the year: 'intended for the use of the poor in spirit, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.' These were first published, like his Commentary, in penny numbers. This work is a suitable companion to the Bible, in the bed-chamber of every one who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. From his remarks, which exhibit a great warmth of affection, a lively energy of expression, a graceful flow of language, and an affluent store of scriptural sentiments, it may soon be ascertained, that he had acquired a deep acquaintance with his own heart, maintained a holy intimacy with his dear Lord, and was well instructed in the mysteries of his everlasting kingdom. Surely his was no common Teacher! There is a lovely simplicity in his sublimest thoughts, and in his hum-

blest themes a becoming dignity. Though sometimes familiar, yet never low; and whenever high, always intelligible. This work has been greatly blessed. I have often left it in sick rooms to be read to the afflicted, where longer reading might have been wearisome and objectionable; and some have been so much attached to these sweet portions, that they would rather give any thing than part with them. At meetings for social prayer among our young men, the reading of a portion or two, by way of parenthesis between the devotions, have been found useful and beneficial. My own opinion is, that the chamber is not well furnished in which are not found these Morning and Evening Portions.

The reviewer of the Doctor's controversy with the Barrister, passes his censure on his familiar use of what he is pleased to call *fondling epithets*, prefixed to the name of the Lord Christ, as *dearest* Jesus. 'The apostles,' saith he, 'were too sensible of the *infinite* distance between the Master and the disciple, between the Saviour and the redeemed, to venture on such familiarity.' But on the supposition it be not mentioned in their epistles, it does not follow, that they never used such terms of affection in their prayers! Can the thought be indulged for a moment, or does this writer mean to say, that our *dearest* Lord, *dearest* in ten thousand points of view, will look with forbiddance on his redeemed and regenerated ones for using such epithets as these, when all is felt which the word conveys? Will he question the inspiration of the Canticles of Solomon? I trow not. And shall we hesitate, when we feel the subject, to adopt the language which the Holy Ghost has taught us, and to say of our *precious* Lord Jesus—" His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is *most sweet;* yea, he is *altogether lovely.* This is my *beloved,* and this is my *friend,* O daughters of Jerusalem!" Sol. Song v. 15, 16. Such epithets will, indeed, fall ungraciously from the lips of those, who know not what it is to draw near to him with holy boldness; who know not what it is to enjoy a holy fellowship with him; but may it

be my happiness to know him more intimately, and to converse with him more familiarly; and may the last words which shall vibrate on my dying lips be none other than *dearest Jesus;* and the first words, if it be his will, which my disembodied spirit shall speak in the langnage of eternity! If these Memoirs meet the eye of this reviewer, let me entreat him, as a brother and a friend, to cultivate a hallowed nearness to the Lord of life and glory, and he will not feel it repulsive to use such language of affectionate intimacy as this towards Him who is not ashamed to call us brethren; nor let him suppose it to be an improper familiarity, as he has conjectured, in the meanest servant of our Emanuel, to say, 'Dearest Jesus, come and sit down with me at the table which thou hast spread. Be thou thine own almoner, and accompany thy kind gifts for the body with grace for the soul.'[a] For has not the Lord himself said, "I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me?" Rev. iii. 20.

In the year of our Lord, 1812, the Doctor completed his Commentary on the *Old* Testament. Although many occurrences impeded his progress in this great undertaking, yet he was indefatigable in his studies, which were indeed to him rather a solace and delight than a labour or fatigue. He wrote of Jesus. This was the favourite theme on which his soul delighted to dwell. The reader has, no doubt, ofttimes seen, in the field of nature, or in the enclosure of the garden, a summer-bee, buried in the honied cell of some lovely flower, and loth to leave it until he has loaded himself with the precious sweets; so, in the scripture field, wherever he found a sacred type of the Lord Jesus, on this he would hang with eager delight, until he had extracted, as far as may be, the liquid sweets. Hence he brought the spiritual nectar and ambrosia, with which his Commentary is so largely and richly fraught, and on which the children of the kingdom feel it their privilege to feed. In perusing his Commentary

[a] Vol. II. page 383.

I am ofttimes reminded of his Sunday Evening Lecture, which I found very profitable and instructive in my younger days. Although his language is sometimes colloquial, it is by design; if elaborate, it is to use plainness. We must remember, that it is the *Poor* Man's Commentary, and therefore, he suits his language to the *poor* man's apprehension; though by hastily adopting provincial expressions, he sometimes overlooks the incorrectness of the grammatical construction, as, 'let you and *I*,' (me).* Whilst the mind is absorbed in the beauty, the grandeur, or the importance of the subject, these little inaccuracies will, through inadvertency, occasionally occur, especially in works so extensive and voluminous.

At the close of his comment on the Book of Psalms, he observes, which appears to me to be a sort of apology for any thing colloquial or familiar, 'Perhaps many who sit under my poor ministry, (if they should condescend to read these feeble offerings on the Psalms) will recollect some of the observations here brought together, which they have heard by word of mouth in my evening lectures. *I write as I speak, without much attention to stile or manner.* For if Jesus be but glorified, the whole both of preaching or writing, according to my apprehension of what is right, is fully answered. And, if God the Holy Ghost, whose blessed office it is to glorify Christ, should graciously condescend to bless this *little* work (as the author is pleased to call it) when I am no more, and make it an instrument in his almighty hand of spreading the sweet savour of Jesus' name among the people; and if any of those among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, should, as they read those lines after my decease, call to mind what they have heard in my personal ministry, and say, 'We remember those words as they came warm from his heart, which we now read while his ashes are mouldering in the cold grave'—the very thought

* See Reflections on the First Psalm, &c.

comforts my soul in the moment of writing, and prompts me to hope, that the prayer of faith I leave behind me for the Lord's blessing on my poor labours, will have its answer in mercy, and that God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ. Amen.'

Should any of my brethren in the ministry be induced to read these Memoirs, I would beg leave to call their attention to his remarks on the ordination of Ezekiel to the ministry of the word. It is a faithful and an affectionate appeal to every minister in our national church. 'If my humble commentary,' saith he, 'could be supposed to fall under the eye of any of the ministers of God's sanctuary, I would venture to say to such an one, Behold! my brother, the solemnity of *Ezekiel's* ordination; and then enquire, whether it can be supposed, that in the church of Jesus now the ordination of any can be less solemn or less important? Did one like the Son of Man ordain Ezekiel? And did the Spirit enter into the prophet, as the Lord spake to him? And can there be any real ordination now, but under the same almighty authority? Did I say at my ordination, that I believed myself *inwardly* moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me that holy office? And have I never enquired since, whether that almighty Spirit hath spoken *in* me to my own soul, and *by* me to the souls of others? Oh! what an awful thing it must be in any to rush into the ministry unsent, uncalled, unauthorized, unanointed! Reader, join my soul in prayer to God, that none may go forth to the Lord's ministry but such as are of the Lord's ordination!'[a]

The conclusion of the comment on the Old Testament carries with it internal evidences of his deep humility and self-distrust. Sweet graces in a mind so highly talented and so greatly blest! 'And now, reader,' saith he, 'as with this last number of my *Poor Man's Commentary* I close the sacred volume of the Old Testament scripture, I beg once

[a] Ezekiel, Chap. ii. Reflections.

for all, and finally and fully, that you will bend the knee in prayer, as the author has done before you, that the Lord will bless all that it contains, as far as it is agreeable to his holy and eternal truths, and pardon all that is amiss, which human weakness, ignorance, and infirmity have given birth to, in this feeble endeavour to be helpful to the Lord's household. May that sin-bearing Lamb of God, that taketh away the iniquities of our most holy things, cleanse all that is here unholy and unclean! It is my intention, if the Lord favours such a design, to prosecute, in the same plain and humble manner, the several books of the New Testament by way of commentary. But this I leave, as I do all other events, bounded as they are within the limits of a life hastening to a close, to Him who fixeth both the time and place of his people's habitation. In the mean season, I here set up my Ebenezer afresh, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped!" And concerning my farther wishes to write the Poor Man's Commentary for the New Testament, as the Lord hath permitted me to finish one on the Old; if the gracious Master should say concerning this, as David remarked upon another occasion, "I have no delight in it;" with him I would submissively say, "Behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth him good!" Amen.

'On my birth-day, making fifty-nine years of sin and vanity! April 13, 1812.'

Plymouth, Charles' Vicarage.

Thus he frequently endeavoured to make memorable the day on which he entered upon this stage of being, by bringing to a conclusion, or sending to the press, some memorial of his love to the Lord Jesus, and of his faithfulness in his service. How prayerful, how submissive, how mindful of his eternal home, did this good man seem to walk, as if always sandaled in preparation for the last stage of his earthly pilgrimage, when his gracious Master should say concerning him, "Arise, let us go hence!"

Previously to the publication of his Commentary on the

New Testament, he published another elaborate work, 'The Poor Man's Concordance and Dictionary to the Sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament;' arranged in alphabetical order, and containing, in addition to the usual literal explanation of words, short doctrinal and practical essays upon certain points of the truths of God. It was published upon the same plan and form as the Commentary. 'Perhaps,' saith he in the preface, 'with some readers, an apology may be thought necessary that I have entered upon this service, in sending forth before the public a *Concordance* before I have finished my *Commentary;* but the truth is, I have, through grace, concluded my writings on the Old Testament scripture, and many months since set up my Ebenezer upon that occasion: what I propose, therefore, by this Concordance, is intended only by way of a *parenthesis,* between my finishing the Commentary on the *Old* Testament and my entering on the *New*. I hope very shortly, if the Lord spares, (and long before my printer is ready for me,) to re-assume that soul-refreshing service of the sacred word, and of going over the gospel of the ever-blessed God; and sure I am, that when I have closed my Concordance, which furnisheth both profit and amusement for my leisure hours, I shall enter on the remaining engagement of the Commentary with increasing earnestness and delight.'[a]

As a specimen of this work, I here subjoin what is written under the word *mystery,* which is brief, yet states what are scriptural mysteries, and gives the references where the word may be found.

'Mystery.—Oh, what a mystery is the gospel of salvation, and the blessed contents of it! What a mystery is that great and fundamental truth, "God in Christ, and Christ in God!" 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. iii. 8. What a mystery that Three sacred Persons should be in One, and yet the same eternal

[a] Vol. VI. page 5.

and undivided Jehovah! 1 John v. 7. What a mystery Jesus speaks of, when addressing the Father, and speaking of himself and the church, "I in them, and thou in me!" John xvii. 23. What a mystery, yea, what a great mystery is godliness; "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory!" 1 Tim. iii. 16. And is there not another mystery to every truly regenerated believer, as great, yea, if possible greater than any; namely, that I should believe in Jesus, and Christ be formed in my heart the hope of glory, when thousands neither know the Lord, nor believe the record God hath given of his dear Son."[a]

On the 26th of September, 1813, was formed in the parish of Charles, Plymouth, the *Corpus Christi* Society, of which our venerable friend was the benevolent founder. As the *Misericordia* Society was instituted for the relief of the poor destitute *stranger;* the *Corpus Christi* Society, as the name imports, was established for the relief of the poor distressed *members* of the mystical *body of Christ*, who are ofttimes poor in worldly circumstances, as well as poor in spirit, though rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. As it was intended not only to relieve their temporal wants, but to soothe the afflicted under their spiritual sorrows, to pray with them and to pray for them, this institution was opened in prayer, at the Household of Faith, on the Lord's day. The motto which he adopted for the society is from 1 Cor. xii. 27. "Now ye are the BODY OF CHRIST, and members in particular." 'It is one express object and design of the Corpus Christi Society, to search and seek out the distressed members of Christ's body; and, as far as ability shall reach, to be distributing to the necessity of saints; to be given to hospitality, and to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them that suffer adversity as being ourselves also in the body: and, whilst doing good to all men, to be

[a] Vol. VI. page 586.

more especially regardful of them who are of the household of faith. It is the Lord's poor, that in the Corpus Christi Society is to be helped from the Lord's alms. It hath no respect to parish, or nation, or kingdom. It is not confined to the establishment, neither limited out of it. Churchman and dissenter lose all distinction in the body of Jesus. All on whom the saving work of God the Holy Ghost hath passed, are, in the truest and fullest sense of the word, members of Christ's body, and as such, are entitled to all the privileges of this society. In conformity to the apostolic pattern, Acts vi. 3—6. the members of this society were to look out and make choice of *seven persons* of honest report, and, as far as may be, of the same description of character as the apostles recommended, to whom the entire government of the society should be entrusted. Of which number, one should be chosen as treasurer, to receive and distribute the alms as might be determined, and another to act as secretary, to enter the minutes of the society. And, by way of record, both for the present generation and all that shall come after, to perpetuate the Lord's gracious dealings with his people among the Corpus Christi members, a book shall be provided for making an entry of all cases, both spiritual and temporal, which come under the notice of the directors, and in which more especially there are special tokens of the Lord's grace manifested to his tried ones in afflictions; that these records may serve to comfort the minds of the people under similar exercises, and encourage the brethren to go on in their office when they thus see the Lord's blessing following them. And it is humbly hoped, that many will partake of the holy joy, and be themselves refreshed, when they shall hear "the righteous acts of the Lord, even his righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel," Judges v. 11. As it will be needful to receive the alms of the people, as well as to request the prayers of the faithful, for the general good of the Corpus Christi, another book shall be opened for the entry of all

subscriptions and benefactions to the society. And, while the affluent, and to whom the Lord hath given largely both of his upper and nether spring bounties, be admonished to be ready to give and glad to distribute, the poorer of the Lord's people be reminded, that though they have but little, yet gladly to give of that little, knowing that a cup of cold water, when a child of God hath nothing warmer to give, and given with an eye to Christ in the name of a disciple, is a costly offering in Jesus' sight. Under this rule it may be proper to add, that it is presumed all the contributors of the Corpus Christi, as the Lord's almoners in the Lord's family, will give all with a single eye to the Lord's glory, accompanied with earnest prayer for the Lord's blessing upon their gifts, that both "prayers and alms may come up for a memorial before God," Acts x. 4.

Early in the year 1814, was published a sermon preached by him at the church of Charles, on the Lord's day, January 2, before the Corpus Christi Society, from Eph. i. 22, 23. To which sermon, were appended the rules and regulations of the society, and from which the above outlines have been abstracted. Although the sermon has little or no reference to the particular purposes of the society, yet it speaks of the headship of Christ, over his body the church, as the Father's gift; and the nature of that church, over which he is the head, as the true Corpus Christi; and the glorious offices, which as the head of the church he sustains. After speaking of the infinite fulness and glory of Christ, and of the increasing revenue of adoration and praise that must accrue to the eternal Jehovah through Him, this highly taught servant of the Lord Jesus follows up the whole with such practical remarks as never embellished the orations of the mere moral school. 'And now,' saith he, 'what is there wanting to make the whole complete before God, but that the members of this glorious head of his body the church should be living *to* him, and living *upon* him, and living *by* him, and deriving all *from* him. If God the Father

hath acknowledged him to be the head of his body the church, shall not the whole Corpus Christi do the same? If Christ is the head of union, the head of influence, the head of communion, of power, efficiency, fulness, grace, glory, will any of his members seek supplies elsewhere? If he be the fulness which filleth all in all, shall not his whole redeemed say as one of old did—"All my springs are in thee?" Brethren! it is a blessed life of grace to be coming to the Lord Jesus every day, and all the day, as we came the first day we heard of his name; and, under a sense of want and weakness, and unworthiness, and sin, to be seeking from our spiritual Head the daily grace, as we need the daily bread. Sweet was the lesson taught the church by the Holy Ghost, and happy the soul that the Lord the Spirit enabled to practise it—"I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know no end thereof," Psalm lxxi. 15, 16.'

This society, as well as the Misericordia, still continues to exercise its benevolent operations. Many in the humble walks of poverty, whose conduct and conversation evidence the power of godliness, have had reason to thank God for this laudable institution. It would greatly alleviate the pressure of human misery, and frequently cheer the heart of the Lord's afflicted ones, if a Misericordia and a Corpus Christi Society were established in every populous parish or district. The Lord will in no wise overlook the least act of benevolence, when done in faith, unto the least of these his brethren, Matt. xxv. 40.

In addition to the attacks made upon the worthy Vicar of Charles by men who deny the truth, and who charged him with nonconformity, other attacks from men who professed to believe the truth were made upon him for his perseverance in conformity, for which they charged him with an irreconcilable inconsistency. A very virulent attack was

made upon him in the year 1815, by a Shimei of the non-conforming school; nor was this the only time that he obtruded himself to the notice of the public, by publishing his uncharitable insinuations and unwarrantable assertions in defamation of Dr. Hawker. Indeed, his several productions may be considered, whatever he may say to the contrary, rather covert attacks on our venerable establishment, than any particular censure on our venerable friend. For, although he condemns him for his adherence to the established church, he speaks thus far in his defence—'If by 'the opprobrious epithet of antinomian, his opponents who 'thus brand him mean to imply, that in the spirit and 'tenour of his life he is inclined to walk in what they de-'signate moral evil, or to think lightly of it, they therein 'greatly slander him, because they affirm what cannot be 'proved.' And in another place, he asserts, 'In the vulgar 'acceptation of the word *moral*, no man stands more free 'from outward blemish, or more adorned with shining vir-'tues than Dr. Hawker.' But of this pamphleteer it may be truly said, "The words of his mouth were smoother than BUTTER, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords," Psalm lv. 21.

But as to the Doctor's adherence to the established church, let him speak for himself, who best knew how to express his own sentiments on this subject. In a letter, addressed to the Rev. J. Stevens, Minister of York Street Chapel, London, on the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, which doctrine our worthy friend considered erroneous, he complains that Mr. Stevens had improperly wrapped up in the question some irrelevant remarks on the establishment of the church of England—'Yet,[a] what have these things,' saith he, 'to do with the point in question? They ought not to be taken into the account, since they neither make for or against the main thing at issue. True, dear Sir,

[a] Vol. IX. page 442.

I do belong to the church of England. For indeed and in truth, amidst many things in her liturgy and discipline which would admit of much improvement, the soundness of her faith in her articles and homilies is such, as without giving offence to any order of orthodox professors whatever, I may venture to say, is exceeded by none. And where I disposed to leave the establishment, because mingled with sound doctrine there are errors in it, which I lament but cannot remove, I should be much at a loss to know what class of dissenters to join, where nothing of equal incorrectness is discoverable!

'Bear with me,' continues he, '(for I mean no offence in saying it,) I know of no community or order among my dissenting brethren, with whom I could meet in church communion, which would afford me an asylum for greater spiritual privileges than I now enjoy. I know indeed many, yea, very many of *the excellent of the earth*, who are members of meetings with whom I now live in true christian and brotherly love; and with whom I shall one day eternally dwell and be for ever united to them in our glorious Head, when communion upon earth is over; but there are causes for which we cannot now always join in the same form of worship.

'Moreover, if I do not greatly err, the Lord hath blessed me and my poor labours where I now am. I was born in the establishment, and new born in it; and have witnessed the new birth of others in it also. Until, therefore, I see the pillar of the cloud going out before me, I should not think myself justified in departing. Every servant of the Lord, ordained by the Lord to his ministry, is like a centinel on his post: and it is death, by the military law, for a soldier to leave his station, before that he who planted the watch comes to relieve him. I need not tell you who it is that fixeth the bounds of his people's habitations.

'But it hath been said, (and probably you may have heard it,) that I am wedded to the establishment by the love of

gain; and but for *the loaves and fishes,* I should have left it long ago. I am in a great measure a stranger to you. Nevertheless, an old man as I am, and lately brought back from the border of the grave, and now every day hastening fast towards it again, may be credited when I say, that had the love of money preponderated with me, many a year since I might have quitted the church of England on very advantageous terms of worldly profit. Neither on this ground hath the temptation been small. For, although I am a man of little expense, yet never, in any one year since I entered the ministry, hath the income of my labours been competent to cover the maintenance of my household; and, but for other resources, I must have been poor indeed! Pardon, dear sir, this garrulity, induced as it hath been from your observations on the church of England, in my belonging to it. Had I been at your elbow when you were framing my creed, I should have put you in mind of a church, to which I hope, notwithstanding our differences in other points, you and I both belong; and without we do belong to it, indeed it is of no consequence what other congregation we are the members of, whether churchman or dissenter. Yes, dear sir, the church to which I allude is the church of Christ, which the glorious Head of it himself saith, is one and but one, "the only one of her mother; the choice one of her that bare her." And the sure and certain proof of belonging to this church is, when "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Titus iii. 5—7. This is the standard of character, whether in the establishment or out of it. This is the door of entrance to every member. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Infant baptism or adult baptism are alike unprofitable without the baptism of the Holy Ghost."[a]

[a] Vol. IX. page 446.

The Rev. George Comb, Minister of Soho Chapel, London, in a sermon delivered on the occasion of his decease, and published as 'A Tribute of Respect to Departed Greatness,' states, and no doubt has good authority for his statement, that 'although a security of *two thousand* pounds a year was offered him to leave the established church, he never would accede to the proposal: he considered himself as a centinel, and till the Lord removed him, he dared not.' 'The Lord,' said he, 'has placed me at Plymouth, and hundreds are witnesses of his power through my ministry.'

As a proof that no sordid love of money influenced his conduct, it is well known what lenity he manifested in gathering his tithes. One of the best estates in his parish was purchased by one of the denomination, called quakers—whether from a persuasion that he should never be troubled by him for his religious tenets, in paying no tithes, I cannot say; but so it proved. For although he ought to have been one of the largest payers, and notwithstanding he paid nothing, yet the worthy Vicar took no legal steps to compel him. I know not how men of this persuasion can reconcile this measure even to common honesty; for if the estate be purchased with this incumbrance, and less be given for the estate because it is so incumbered, and not tithe-free, how in righteousness can they withhold the tithe from the incumbent as soon as they take possession; when it is as much his right as if he had been a lay-impropriator, or a poor widow having a yearly claim of a decimal annuity on the estate? If they never purchased the tithes, it must follow, that they dishonestly withhold them.

It may be supposed by some, from his numerous publications and extensive popularity, that he must have reaped considerable pecuniary advantages from this resource. But the very low price at which he directed his works to be sold, precluded the return of much gain from this quarter; and whatever profit was derived from their sale, was almost always devoted to some charitable purpose. His labours

were literally given to the public. The volume of 'Scripture Extracts,' which contains more than seven hundred pages in octavo, was given to the original publisher on condition of his supplying his sunday school, assembling at the Household of Faith, with certain articles of clothing. If he wanted to support a charity, the publication of a new volume sometimes furnished him with supplies.

It may not be improper to introduce here some of the irregularities, if such they may be deemed, with which he was charged, either by avowed opponents or pretended friends. One was, that he *preached extempore.* As if he thereby deviated from the general practice of what are called the regular clergy. But, although the practice of preaching from manuscript is become customary, it was considered such an innovation in the reign of Charles the second, as deserved his majesty's censure. In the statute book of the university of Cambridge, this document is found, as inserted during his reign, bearing date October 8, 1674, addressed to the vice-chancellor, &c.

'Whereas, his majesty is informed, that the practice of reading sermons is generally taken up by the preachers before the university, and therefore, continues even before himself; his majesty hath commanded me to signify to you his pleasure, that the said practice, which took its beginning from the disorders of the late times, be wholly laid aside; and that the said preachers deliver their sermons both in Latin and English by memory without book; as being a way of preaching, which his majesty judgeth most agreeable to the use of foreign churches; to the custom of the university heretofore, and to the nature of that holy exercise. And that his majesty's commands in these premises may be duly regarded and observed, his further pleasure is, that the names of all such ecclesiastical persons as shall continue the present supine and slothful way of preaching, be from time to time signified to me, by the vice-chancellor for the time being, on pain of his majesty's displeasure.

'Monmouth.'

Without any disparagement to others, I consider myself justified in saying, that no man throughout the kingdom, had greater popular talents for extemporaneous preaching than Dr. Hawker. As a textuary, he was unrivalled. The unhesitating readiness and numerical exactness with which he would quote the chapter and verse of the various numerous texts, which he would produce in proof of his doctrine, or in illustration of his text, in a sermon preached wholly extempore, was indeed surprizing. At an evening party, when a Bible has been called for, that he might give his thoughts on some chapter for the edification of those present, I have known him decline giving them the trouble, as it was too early to order the candles and too dusky to see without them; and beginning the chapter, as if reading it, he has repeated the whole, verse after verse, and interwoven his exposition with all the correctness as if a Bible had been opened before him. And this I have known him do, when the faculties more frequently become enfeebled, even after he had attained the seventy-third year of his age.

The author of 'the Pulpit, or a Biographical and Literary Account of Eminent Popular Preachers,' gives this sketch of his character, interspersed with other observations too lengthy or unnecessary to quote :—'Preaching forms his vitality. Faulty as his sermons may appear, it is difficult to specify his defects. Such is the animation of his addresses, such the efficacy of his delivery, such his oratorical originality, that his deficiencies are scarcely perceptible when he speaks; while, owing to the strong impression which true eloquence always makes on the feelings, his errors are hardly discoverable even in the solitude of retrospection. What, however, are the commanding qualifications of this distinguished ambassador of christianity? He owes all to his zeal. Survey him in the pulpit—the animation with which he joins in congregational psalmody; the awful fervour with which he presents himself at the footstool of divine mercy; the strong agitation of his soul; the solemnity of his rising,

and the impressive distinctness with which he announces his text; the dignity with which he asserts the doctrine, and the severity with which he denounces the inflictions of his religion. His looks speak. Dictated by his feelings, his gestures are not oratorical; they are natural and becoming as well as energetic. He is rather an apostle than a preacher. Whenever he cites scriptural authority (in which he fails not) for the opinions inculcated by him, his emphasis serve as elucidations of the passages he instances. Many may object to his preaching; but none can deny its power. His gifts are great. Judgment may often demur to his authority; but the heart is always led captive at his will.'

Such is the opinion of one who knew how to appreciate talent; himself no ordinary observer of the faults or excellencies of the popular preacher; yet all are not blemishes which may be depicted as such upon his ingenious mind. An occasional colloquiality may be necessary to meet the apprehension of the less informed, and such a condescension may enhance the sublimity or brilliancy of the ideas which may immediately open all their lustre upon them. The commanding influence of his preaching was not owing merely to his zeal, his animation, or his eloquence; but to a vital *unction* which accompanied his preaching with power from on high. It was this that led the heart captive, though the judgment was demurring.

Another charge against him, was *praying extempore* before and after sermon. But the adoption or use of a collect in the pulpit, before or after sermon, has no warrant from the rubric of the liturgy. This also, as well as preaching from manuscript, is a greater liberty assumed than the offering of a prayer extempore, which is called by Bishop Hall, 'a conceived prayer.' In his answer to Smectymnuus, in defence of the liturgy, the bishop thus writes:—'It is a 'false ground, that the imposing the book (of common prayer) 'ties godly men from exercising their gift in prayer. An 'enjoined liturgy,' continues he, 'may well stand with the

'freedom of a prayer conceived; the desk is no hindrance to 'the pulpit; he is wanting in his duty that slackeneth either 'service.' Here is not only a defence of the practice, but a censure on the man who exerciseth not his gift in prayer in the services of the pulpit. In an appendix to the Rev. 'George Herbert's Country Parson,' there are two prayers thus entitled; 'The Author's Prayer before Sermon, and his Prayer after Sermon;' which indubitably shews, that, at least, at some period of his ministry, the worthy orator of the university of Cambridge deemed it his province to use before and after sermon his own conceived prayer. There is a prayer to be used before all sermons, lectures, and homilies prescribed in the fifty-fifth Canon; but with this limitation, *in this form or to this effect*, as briefly as conveniently as they (viz. the preachers and ministers) may—always concluding with the Lord's prayer.

But the awful solemnity with which he approached the mercy-seat, the holy boldness with which he pleaded the promises, the fervid affection which seemed to glow in his bosom, the privileged nearness which he appeared to feel whilst he urged his petition and sought the divine blessing, carried ofttimes conviction to the heart, that the man was among the excellent of the earth, who "worship God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Whilst thus engaged, there was dignity in his very attitude; and in all his pleas a visible intimacy of communion; like a courtier, who is much at court, feels himself at home in the king's presence; his very soul was apparently going forth in his devotions; or, as St. Jude expresses it, "Praying in the Holy Ghost."

Another charge against him, was his use of *hymns* in the church; but perhaps, in this particular, no minister in the united kingdom was more regular. He compiled a selection of hymns for the evening service, which service was originally intended for the instruction of the sunday school, with a view also to the benefit of their parents and friends; and

was conducted after the following manner. It commenced with singing, after which he read the liturgy, as far as to the first lesson. Opposite the desk was a bench, on which stood a select band of the best readers from his sunday school, who were all clad in an uniform dress with caps and tippets, given them gratuitously from the funds of the charity. After he had made some introductory remarks, he directed the children by a mere bend, to commence. They read, verse by verse, until he wished to enlarge or expound, and so on to the end of the chapter; when the children again sang a hymn from his selection suited to the subject, and the congregation was dismissed, with the usual benediction. The accuracy and distinctness with which the poor children read was admirable; and the sweetness and harmony of their voices in singing was attractive. In addition to those for whom it was originally designed, a large congregation attended.

But, at the morning and afternoon service, he rigidly adhered to the old version of Sternhold and Hopkins. He deemed their rude and unpolished verses to contain sweeter melody from their accordance to the spirit of the Psalmist, than the tuneful numbers of Tate and Brady, which are sometimes not only destitute of gospel elucidations, but even repugnant to the leading articles of the church. No minister is called upon to subscribe to them. Their use is wholly optional. Certain detached verses of Sternhold and Hopkins would he often repeat with his usual emphasis and pathos, and dwell much on their beautiful simplicity; among which was the following—

> " O God, my strength and fortitude,
> *Of force*, I must love thee;
> Thou art my castle and defence,
> In my necessity." *Psalm* xviii. 1.

There is certainly a sweet simplicity and a natural elegancy, which no time can render obsolete, in the second line, ' *Of force*, I must love thee.' The old version has no other authority for its use than Queen Elizabeth's injunctions

to her clergy, which injunctions are recognized in the thirty-seventh article of the established church. The clause to which I refer, runs thus: 'For the comfort of such as delight in 'music, it may be permitted, that *at the beginning or end* of 'common prayer, either at morning or evening, there may be 'sung a *hymn*, or such like song, to the praise of Almighty 'God, in the best melody and music that may be conveni-'ently devised, having respect that the sentence of the hymn 'may be understood and perceived.' This extract as fully authorizes the use of hymns, or such like songs, as it does the use of Sternhold and Hopkins' version, at the beginning or end of common prayer, provided that the sentiment be correct and the language intelligible. Consequently, there can be no irregularity in selecting a book of hymns for the use of his sunday school, though sung by the children at the beginning or end of the evening service.

Contrary to usual practice, he would sometimes address the congregation with a brief introduction before he announced his text; but his design in doing this was to call the attention of the people to that portion of God's word on which he purposed to ground his discourse. This irregularity, as some would deem it, is not without a precedent either among the fathers of the Reformation, or the divines of the Lutheran church. But an introduction preceding the text, when prolix, rather wearies than excites attention. But so fascinating and powerful were his addresses of this description, that they rivetted the attention, awakened reflection, and, under the divine blessing, ofttimes produced the happiest effects. Many who could not acquiesce in his statements from their misconceptions of scriptural doctrines, were constrained to admire his eloquence, and revere the man.

But to notice all the frivolous objections, scandalous obloquies, and unscriptural points of doctrine, with which the pamphlets were freighted, that have been launched into the troubled waters of religious controversy to carry on warfare

against him, would fill a volume of larger dimensions than any custom-house ledger. A few will be noticed as we proceed in our review of succeeding years. His opponents out of the church have charged him with an inconsistency in declaring, that there is no other regeneration than that which is effected by the power of God; and yet in the baptismal service thanking God that it hath pleased him to regenerate the child! But what inconsistency is there in this, as it regards the one sole agency in this work? All is uniformly ascribed to God. It is not my present purpose to write in defence of our formularies. A revisal is much needed. Yet there is more consistency, in supposing that infants may be regenerated by the Holy Ghost, in consequence of united, fervent, faithful prayer, grounded on the promise, "that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. xviii. 19. than there is in maintaining, that a man can regenerate himself, or make himself a new creature in Christ Jesus, or that he can save himself by falling in with the offers of divine grace, as too many preach, as if he were capable of doing this without any regeneration at all! His little tract, entitled, 'The Child Baptized,'[a] is an interesting illustration of this ordinance, as administered in the Church of England.

The reformers of our national church, having drawn up the baptismal service for the household of faith, and for them only, have given to the sign (in language at least) all the effects of the thing signified. But had they been as clear in their views of the doctrine of Baptism, as of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, it had been, no doubt, differently expressed. It is evident from Bishop Latimer's Sermons, that he knew how to distinguish between the sign, and the thing signified, as the following quotation will shew—'Christ saith, "Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the

[a] Vol. III. page 633.

'kingdom of God." He must have a regeneration. And what 'is this regeneration? It is not to be *christened in water*, 'as these fire-brands (the papists) expound it, and nothing 'else. How is it to be expounded then? St Peter sheweth, '"that we be born again, not by mortal seed, but by immortal; 'by the word of the living God." Thus cometh our new 'birth.' Water-baptism, whether administered to an infant or an adult, by sprinkling or immersion, can be of no avail without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. What has been said of circumcision may be said of this rite, in Christ Jesus neither *baptism* availeth any thing nor *unbaptism*, but a new creature, Gal. vi. 15.

In the year of our Lord, 1818, he completed 'The Poor Man's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures;' which he commemorates in terms of deepest humility and liveliest thankfulness. 'And now, reader,' saith he, 'in folding up the whole of my Poor Man's Commentary, while I lie low in the dust before God, under a conscious sense of unworthiness, and my continued short-comings, I desire to set up a renewed Ebenezer to the praise of his grace, who hath hitherto helped me, and borne with me all the way through, in the many years since I first entered upon it, to the hour of writing with my pen the last line of it. The more I contemplate the subject, the more I stand amazed at the Lord's goodness and my undeservings.' He declares the sole end of this work to have been, 'to hold up and to hold forth the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Christ, and as the sole perfection of all his people.' After commending the reader to God, and to the word of his grace, he subscribes this memorandum:—'Plymouth, Charles' Vicarage, April 13, 1816, once more made memorable in being my birth-day, counting sixty-three years of the Lord's grace and my sins.'

In his Commentary, he gave great offence to many of his brethren in the ministry, both in the church and out of the church, from the candid disavowal which he therein makes of the doctrine of *progressive holiness*, and more especially from

his general view of sanctification on 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. But it appears to me, that they have not duly considered the subject, nor fully apprehended his doctrine. That the humblest reader of this Memoir may not mistake the term, progressive holiness, I beg leave to state for the information of such, that he nowhere calls in question the doctrine of final perseverance, but was most fully convinced of the scriptural soundness and heart-cheering sweetness of the truth. But there are many who maintain, that every child of God grows holier and holier by a certain progression; so that to-day he is holier than he was yesterday, and will be to-morrow holier than he is to-day, and that thus he continues and proceeds in this progressive holiness until he arrives at perfection; that the flesh, as well as the spirit, is partaker of this progressive ratio of holiness; though St. Paul, *twenty-three* years after his conversion, thus writes to the Romans; "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing!" Rom. vii. 18. This doctrine of progressive holiness, our venerable commentator denies; not only from his own experience, who was now between sixty and seventy years of age, and had long walked with God, but from the history of the saints recorded in Holy Scripture.

As a man, when made a new creature in Christ Jesus, is as much in Christ Jesus the first day of his regeneration, as in the last day of his life; so a sinner sanctified, which is but another term for the same act, is as much sanctified the first day when brought into union with Christ, as he will be to the time of his removal from a state of grace to the fruition of glory. But he nowhere denies the progressive fruits of this sanctification, though not in any particular ratio are these fruits expected to appear. Yet fruits there will be more or less; which fruits of the Spirit he does not consider our sanctification, nor properly speaking any part of it, but the sweet *testimonies* and happy *effects* of our sanctification. Permit me to ask, how can any dare say, that this denial of progressive holiness, in this view of it, promotes licentiousness? From a

misconception or a wilful perversion of his doctrine, (the Lord knoweth which it may be,) he has met with cruel usage and base slander. Yes, blessed man of God, like thy Master, thou hast been wounded in the house of thy friends!

In speaking of sanctification, he thus writes: 'Sanctification, or to sanctify, hath a different meaning in the different scriptures. But the most general sense is, either to set apart, consecrate, or dedicate to a sacred service: or to purify, cleanse, and make holy what was before unholy in our nature. In the *former*, Christ is said to have "sanctified himself," John xvii. 19. In the *latter*, the church, when regenerated, is said "to be washed, to be sanctified, to be justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. In the regeneration, as it does not appear that any alteration is made on the body, he maintains, that in the latter sense no part of it is sanctified. But inasmuch as the body becomes an habitation of God through the Spirit, it is a vessel set apart for the Master's use; and every child of God is taught "how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour," 1 Thess. iv. 4.

'But although thus *set apart*, the body is not *renewed*. Although the spirit of a man be renewed, when he is quickened from a death of sin to newness of life, yet the body is not renewed until it be reduced to the dust and renewed from the grave at the general resurrection. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and will be so to the end of the day. Hence the unceasing warfare; "for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things which we would," Gal. v. 17. But this contrariety could not exist if the body were renewed. In consequence of these internal conflicts, which every one who has received the grace of the Spirit feels more or less to be carrying on between the flesh and the spirit, sin will sometimes in its struggles, even in them, gain the mastery, though not a perpetual or habitual dominion. Many imagine, that they shall

go on subduing one sin after another till all be subdued; as if there were a time, on this side the grave, when they should be able to sit down at ease, and have no more spiritual conflicts to fight; but is there a sin subdued, that will not in some future day present itself afresh to the mind, and give the soul the same struggle and pain as at the first? There is no truce in this war. There is no pause to render it prudent to unbuckle the armour, until we unbuckle it for the grave. The helmet of hope, the shield of faith, and other parts of the spiritual harness may be left at the threshold of heaven, for we shall not want them within the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem; but as long as we are in the body we shall want all and every part of the armour of God to conflict with sin in the flesh.' 'I know not what other men's hearts feel,' saith this highly favoured man of God, 'but the daily workings of corruption in my heart shew me that the carnal mind is still carnal. Ps. xxxvi. 1. Rom. vii. 14. I feel a daily warfare. I groan being burdened. I not only feel these workings when occupied with divine things, but often in the house of God. Like Paul, I know what it is, "that when I would do good evil is present with me," Rom. vii. 21. In the pulpit, at the table of the Lord, at the mercy-seat, often when in a moment of sweet communion with my God and Saviour, a train of thoughts rush through me like unbidden guests, and rob God at his face of his glory, and my soul for the time of comfort! Can a *body* where such things are be in part renewed? Am I in a progressive state of holiness in a body where I find such cause of humblings, and which I loathe?"[a]

'I am well aware,' saith he, 'that the whole tide of commentators are against me, while I would desire with all humility of soul, (instead of swimming with them down the stream) to bear up my feeble bark to the torrent of this opinion.' After speaking of the personal election, redemption, and sanctification of the whole church of God in Jesus

[a] See his comment on 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

Christ our Lord, he makes this observation, that ' while these grand and indeed (as they may well be called) fundamental truths of the gospel, are generally received and admitted in the church of the faithful as so many standards of decision, against which there is no appeal, the glorious doctrine of sanctification doth not seem to be as clearly understood as those of election and redemption. The more generally received opinion is :—*that at regeneration we are regenerated but in part, and that as well in body as spirit. There is a perfection, say they, of parts of the new man in both, but only in degrees. Though there be a complete perfection in Christ, in which they are interested, yet their sanctification is imperfect. They are in a progressive state of holiness and progressive sanctification, but not complete in either. This, I apprehend, is the generally received opinion.*

The Doctor's view of the subject appears to be this :—that by *one act* of God the Father, before the foundation of the world, the church was chosen in Christ, " to be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 4. That by *one act* of God the Son, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus *once* for all. " For by *one* offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. That by *one act* of God the Holy Ghost, the soul is regenerated ; for regeneration, when considered as the quickening of a sinner dead in trespasses and sins to newness of life, can be but one act. But on the supposition, that this act of God the Spirit in regeneration is but in part, not only this beautiful order and equality in those *acts* of grace is destroyed, but a train of the most painful consequences arise, which involve the mind in endless apprehensions concerning the eventual perfection. ' And wherefore,' saith our worthy friend, ' should the work of regeneration, and the sanctification included in it, be an imperfect act of God the Spirit, more than the act of election in God the Father, or redemption by God the Son ? If it be only for a moment admitted,

that regeneration doth not renew the body, neither was ever intended, during the time-state of the church, to renew the body, every difficulty vanisheth.'

On the supposition, that no alteration whatever is made on the body at regeneration, he concludes that no part of it is sanctified, that is to say, free from corruption and sin; yet he meets the difficulty, how, with all this alloy, the body is made the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us, 1 Cor. vi. 19. with this argument—that it enhanceth the grace, that the Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, and who is himself all holiness, should dwell in these bodies of filth and defilement. O the grace of our condescending God![a]

It may well be asked, if the body were *renewed*, though but in part, how it could remain a *natural* body? 'It is the language,' saith he, 'of Jesus himself, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is the same as it was when born, and so remains till it returns to its original dust. For "it is then sown a natural body," 1 Cor. xv. 44. Whereas, if it were renewed, or, as some speak, in part renewed, that part, however small or great, would be by so much, spiritual: and how then could it become liable to corruption, and be sown at death a *natural* body? Moreover, the apostle, speaking of himself many a year after his conversion, that is, after his regeneration, declared that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelled no good thing, Rom. vii. 18. a thing impossible to have said, if any part of his body had been regenerated.[b]

But although this venerable commentator speaks of the body as still carnal, and that there is no holiness inherent in the body, let not the reader suppose for a moment, that the believer is not called upon through the Spirit to keep the body in subjection, or to mortify the deeds of the body, or that he means to inculcate this. 'When God the Holy Ghost,' saith he, 'quickens the soul of a child of God by

[a] See on 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

[b] See on Gal. v. 16—18.

regeneration, he becomes a life-giving, soul-renewing source in the spiritual part; and whilst influencing the spirit of the believer, in opening continual communications from Christ as the Head to his members, the redeemed are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body by his indwelling presence,'[a] Rom. viii. 13. 'And while the Lord the Spirit enables me to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, let all the fruits of the Spirit testify whose I am and to whom I belong, as sweet testimonies and effects, while Christ alone is the cause of all my salvation and all my desire.'[b]

But to sum up in few words his view of this interesting subject, it is this:—that the child of God is when regenerated only renewed in the spirit of his mind; that the body is still a vile body, a corrupt body, and will remain so till it be sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body; that the believer is enabled to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost; that the keeping of the body in subjection, the mortifying of the flesh with all its vile affections, and the gracious fruits of the Spirit which appear in the believer's life, is not his sanctification, but the sweet testimonies and happy effects of his sanctification.

Notwithstanding he maintains that the body is not renewed, nor so sanctified as to be free from corruption and sin, he considers it, by the indwelling of the Spirit, a temple consecrated to God, or a vessel like that of the sanctuary, set apart for the Master's use, and ought not to be used for unhallowed purposes. If by progressive sanctification any one understand, that a believer continues more or less through the indwelling of the Spirit to evidence his sanctification by the fruits of the Spirit, or at least by some signs of spiritual life, he by no means denies this; but maintains it, though the believer may sometimes for wise purposes be stripped like a tree of both fruit and leaves, and

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[a] See on 1 Cor. vi. 15, to the end.

[b] See Reflections on Gal. v.

his spiritual life be only known by the peeling of the bark, if I may so speak, that is to say, by an investigation of the inward man; yet when the Holy Spirit (as the life that is in him proceeding from the root) puts forth his strength, the believer shall again flourish in all his vigour, verdure, and fruitfulness. If by progressive holiness, others may understand the christian pilgrim's continued progress in the King's highway of holiness, he by no means denies this, though he shews that he has no holiness of his own; for his very best dress of this description is indeed a poor tattered garment, nay, nothing but filthy rags. He acknowledges that the least deviation from the right path humbles and grieves him. But, if by progressive holiness any one understand, that this body, the flesh, becomes holier and holier, this he denies; although as a proof of his sanctification in the Spirit, the body be kept in subjection. He denies the sanctification of the fleshly body, either in whole or in part, though a vessel set apart for the Master's use; and this vessel, as far as it is cleansed, is not so by virtue of any inherent holiness in itself, but by the subduing and restraining influence of the Holy Ghost. 'In relation to church members,' saith he, '*walking honestly towards them that are without*, it were a reproach to the name of Christ if the ungodly had any charge to bring against them. Very sweet to this purpose is that comprehensive exhortation by the Holy Ghost to the church, that whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, believers in Christ are expected above all men to be eminent in the practice of these things.'[a]

The same error which some entertain of progressive holiness, as if it were something inherent or acquired, is also indulged by others as to progressive strength. Before a man be regenerated, it is acknowledged by all who hold the grand doctrines of the gospel, that he has no spiritual health or strength in him; but after his regeneration, some speak of

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[a] See on 1 Thess. iv. 9. 12.

the growing strength of a believer, as if he had some inherent or acquired strength in himself. But by way of appendix to the above observations, I beg leave to enter my protest against this delusion. If by any inherent strength I am become stronger in myself than at the time the Lord was first pleased to renew me by his grace, then am I less in want and more independent of the grace of the Spirit. But who does not see the presumption of this conclusion? The child of God, as soon as quickened by the Holy Ghost to newness of life, is only strong in almighty strength; whatever strength is made perfect in his weakness, it is all from the sufficiency of divine grace. And after the believer has gone forth in the Lord's strength for twenty years together, he has no inherent strength; he is strong only in the almighty power of Jesus. He is still all weakness in himself, and has no acquired stock upon which he can draw; but, as at the first, so to the last, in the Lord, and in him only, has he righteousness and strength.

But to return to the narration. In the same year he completed his Poor Man's Commentary, he was bereaved of his son Charles, a promising young man, who unadvisedly submitted to an operation, as before stated, which terminated in his death. It was to his father a source of much distress. He seems to refer to this event in a sermon preached on the last Lord's day morning of this year, 1816. It commences with these words:—'The mind of every one renewed by grace wants something continually to lean upon. And when under divine teaching the Lord hath brought the child of God into an apprehension and enjoyment of the everlasting love of God to the church in Christ as the *cause*, and the unchanging purposes of God to the church in Christ as the *effect*, he hath then found a source of never-failing comfort to bear him up and to bear him on amidst all the changes of time, until the Lord shall bear him home, and bring him to his everlasting kingdom.' 'You need not,' saith he in the conclusion, 'be told that you live in a changeable and dying

world, and yourself in changeable and dying circumstances. You know not what a day or what an hour may bring forth. If you look into houses or families, kingdoms or empires, all seem fluctuating. Both the world and the men of the world can promise you nothing. "It is a time of Jacob's trouble." '*

The substance of this sermon was published in a tract, entitled, ' The Immoveable Kingdom, the subject of peculiar blessedness to the Lord's people, amidst all the dead and dying circumstances of this moveable world; affectionately sent and recommended to the church of God the first day of the new and eventful year, 1817.' Perhaps, he little anticipated, when he published this little tract, from which the above quotations are taken, that this eventful year would take away the desire of his eyes with a stroke. His beloved wife departed this life, April 3, 1817. Five and forty years, as before observed, had they lived together in the mutual enjoyment of each other's affections. Year after year was he thus called to pay a visit to the grave; not as the minister who speaks a word of comfort to others, but as the mourner that needed himself to be comforted!

It appears, that from the year 1817, he regularly published, early in January, a tract, as a ' New Year's Gift for the Church of Christ, or an affectionate Salutation to the Household of Faith, on the opening of the new year.' There is such an elegant simplicity, godly sincerity, and sweet assurance, expressed in the introduction of one of them, that the reader will pardon a brief quotation, as an illustration of his manner of addressing, in these tokens of remembrance, the spiritual church of Christ. ' Verging as I now am on the confines of eternity, and well aware that every step I take in the present time-state at my advanced age, the world is receding more and more from me, and I from the world, I gladly avail myself to catch the passing moment as it flies, that it may bear on its wing, at this era, my salutation of the church.

* Vol. X. page 138.

I esteem it indeed no small mercy, that since the Lord hath spared me to behold the close of the past year, through the same gracious indulgence I am favoured at the opening of the new, " to greet the brethren which are in Christ Jesus;" and once again (peradventure it may be the last,) to send them my annual love-token of remembrance, " before I go hence, and be no more seen." ' Like the traveller returning from his journey, and being nearly arrived home, to whose longing eye the habitation, in which are lodged all that is dear to him, begins to open before him, and a thousand tender images of delight arise to his imagination; so to my spiritual senses, the many glorious things which are spoken of in scripture concerning my eternal home come in full prospect before me, and fill my soul with a joy unspeakable, as I approach the precincts of that blessed city, whose builder and maker is God.'[a] One commences with this motto, which since it is not retained in the copy published in his works, I here transcribe: ' *Salutem a Salutis Fonte, Jesu Christo:*' Health from the Fountain of Health in Jesus Christ to the church of Christ, in the opening of the new year of our Lord, 1821.'

More than twenty years had elapsed, since he published his Sermons on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost: at the close of the year 1817, he published six Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. As the former were intended ' for the more immediate use of those, whose leisure and ability might afford much opportunity for study;' in publishing the latter, he had chiefly in view the benefit of the labouring class of the Lord's people, who had not time for such indulgence. In the fifth Lecture, his arguments for the personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost, deduced from the sin against him being unpardonable, must be sufficiently clear to the meanest capacity to understand. It may be summed up in

[a] Vol. VII. page 551.

this brief manner :—if the Holy Ghost were not a *person*, he could not be *sinned against;* and if not *God*, that sin were not *blasphemy;* and if not a *distinct person* both from the Father and the Son, this blasphemy were not *unpardonable;* for all other sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven, except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

It was in the year 1817, as appears from the date on the title-page, that he published his little tract, 'Bread selling to the Poor at half-price, a sweet memorial of the Bread of Life, which is given to the poor of the Lord's people without money and without price.'[a] No apology will be deemed necessary for noticing this little memorial; for the cause of his writing it furnishes another trait in this good man's character, namely, his attention to the temporal as well as to the spiritual wants of the poor. 'What gave birth to this little tract,' says he, 'was this: in order to soften, in a parochial way, the pressure of the times, which hath borne hard upon the poor in the present winter, both from the difficulty of procuring employment, and the high price of provisions; the parish of Charles, in Plymouth, by voluntary contributions and collections every Lord's day morning in the church, adopted the plan of selling a thousand sixpenny loaves of the best quality, for threepence to each person. And it is pleasing to observe, with what delight the poor, to whom this little bounty was offered, received the well-meant favour. The cheerfulness of their looks, and the promptness with which they proffered their few pence from their scanty pockets, loudly bespoke the grateful sense they entertained of the kindness shewn them.'

'It was at one of those public sales in our churchyard for bread at this reduced price, when the pressure of the people was so great they almost trod one upon another, that a thought struck me, how blessed would it be to behold such an eagerness in the people of the Lord for the bread of life.

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[a] Vol. IX. page 262.

What a blessed occasion, I said, would it be to speak to them on the subject? And while their looks testify so much cheerfulness at the receipt of this little boon of the earth, to call their attention to that free gift of God in Jesus, the living bread, which came down from heaven, of whom whosoever eateth shall live for ever, John vi. 51. But the clamour at those sales, from the earnestness of the multitude, totally precluded the hope of being heard on the subject, however interesting. I therefore determined, under the Lord's grace, to adopt this plan of addressing them, and *with every loaf give a copy of this tract;* and send it forth, as I have now done, under the hope of the Lord's blessing. In the discourse I have endeavoured to raise from it, I still consider myself as having those poor ones of the Lord's family before me. I am in idea still at the sale, and while each one is so busy in stepping forward for the cheap purchase of this loaf, I put my little tract into his hand, to tell him of the bread of life, and to be had without money and without price.' After illustrating the subject by various instances of scripture history, and holding forth the Lord Jesus as the living bread, which came down from heaven for the satisfying of his needy family, and shewing that they who have Christ for their portion have a feast-day every day, and in him a Benjamin's portion to live upon in time and to all eternity, he applies the subject by way of question:—'And now what say our poor purchasers of our bread to these things? You are come to our cheap shop to supply yourselves and little ones with a small portion of the bread that perisheth, is not the bread of life more cheap, more necessary, more free, more full, more generous, more blessed? Can any market equal the market of free grace? Can any bread equal the bread of life?'

Let the men who vilify the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, say, whether the life of this man was demoralized thereby? Whilst he unites with his benevolent parishioners to provide for the bodily wants of the poor, how promptly he avails himself of the opportunity of drawing their atten-

tion to the bread of life. And to do this he spares no expense. With every loaf he gave a copy of this tract, and that there may be a careful distribution, himself attends to put this little book into the hand of every purchaser. One thousand tracts, at least, were thus distributed by him among the poor, at his own expense. And he tells us, that it forms a luxury of the purest kind (when unmixed with pride and self-righteousness) to be instrumental to the poor man's comfort.

This year, 1817, he also published in a series of tracts, 'Sweet Morsels to Hungry Souls, in the Lord's word for the Lord's people, affectionately recommended to the Church of God.' The circumstance of distributing bread to the hungry poor may have furnished him with the idea. In the preface, he takes occasion to remark, what a fulness may be found under the Lord's teaching from short sentences, and even sometimes from a single word in the scriptures of our God. He notices also, 'How sweet and ponderous sometimes the marginal notes and various renderings of our translators of the Bible are.' 'In these tracts,' saith he, 'I have availed myself of the labours of those men of God, in gathering some few of the sweet morsels for spiritual refreshment of the Lord's people.' His own Bible is rich in marginal notes; for he was accustomed, if a passage more than ordinarily struck his mind, to make memorandums of it in the margin. Hence the Bible he commonly used is marked in most parts with such observations. As several friends from time to time solicited permission to copy them, he selected a few to shew to others his plan, that if more generally adopted, it might become under the Lord's blessing more generally useful, which he published under the title of 'Fragments from Holy Scripture.'

The writer of this Memoir was much pleased with the paternal affection and christian solicitude expressed in an autograph of his, in the blank leaf of a Bible, presented to his eldest daughter; and has procured a copy, that the spiritually-minded reader might share in the gratification

and follow up his example, that if the Lord so will a divine blessing may attend it.

'*Memorial: to bring to remembrance.—Psalms the 38th and 70th.*'

'This holy Bible is the gift of a father to a child, as the truest pledge of real affection; and inscribed with the names of Robert Hawker, and his dearly beloved Mary.

'His prayers go before and follow his boon, that an unction from the Holy One may accompany the constant perusal of those sacred truths of God, to make her wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; and that a daily spiritual and scriptural apprehension may be wrought in her mind and understanding "to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

'Lord! cause her to be graciously enlightened into a personal knowledge of and communication from the Holy Three in One, which bear record in heaven; that when the hand that now writes this memorial shall have ceased its office, her spirit may have been brought into such a holy familiarity with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, that in her changing also time for eternity, it may be no more than from living here by faith, she may then be admitted into open vision by sight, with that glory that shall be revealed, to see God in Christ as he is, and to know even as we are known!'

September, 1826.

Soon after the publication of his Commentary, the Doctor published a small tract, entitled, 'The True Gospel, no Yea and Nay Gospel, affectionately recommended to the people of God in the present low estate of the Church.' Of this motley gospel, which he shews to be at variance with truth, he gives the following outlines:—'A yea and nay gospel takes for granted, that all men are alike in a salvable state; neither can any man fail of salvation, but from his neglect of the opportunity, at one time or other

afforded him. And if a man seeks for acceptance before God partly by faith and partly by good works, he is certain of happiness. Christ is made, by the yea and nay gospel, nothing more than a procuring cause; so that if a man so far makes use of Christ, as by him to seek out his own salvation in the exercises of faith and repentance and good works, he doth all that is required of him, and Christ will make up the deficiency.'[a]

In controverting these points, he shews, that if a man's salvation depend upon his improvement of any opportunity, the mind must be left in wretched uncertainty; moreover, if it depend on any improvement on our part, it is not wholly of grace. He animadverts on the unscriptural phrases of *offering* Christ to the congregation, or of *pressing* Christ upon their acceptance; as if every thing depended on the very opportunity, and not on the purpose of God and the grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. He maintains that the yea and nay gospel was not the creed of the apostles; that the salvation of the church of Christ, and the promises of God to that church, were not a matter of doubtful issue; neither did the apostles preach such doctrines. "But as God is true," saith the apostle Paul, "our word towards you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay; but in him was yea: for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us," 2 Cor. i. 18—20.[b] He asserts, that such is the certainty of the salvation of the church of Christ, 'that nothing of peradventure can arise; no yea and nay can come between to make the event doubtful. The charter of heaven runs in these words:—"I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.'

[a] Vol. IX. page 473.

[b] Vol. IX. page 476.

Under the assumed signature of *Verax*, which, says one of his reviewers, should have been *Menax*, the Rev. James Bidlake of Plymouth, published a pamphlet, entitled, 'The True Gospel of Dr. Hawker, shewn to be at variance with the gospel of Christ and his apostles, and therefore undeserving of its assumed appellation.' In this pamphlet, he controverts the Doctor's statements, and attempts to prove that salvation is conditional; that to offer Christ to the congregation even indiscriminately is scriptural; and indicates, that it is by believing a sinner becomes interested in Christ. The title-page carries in its front a very bold assumption, without any foundation in truth to uphold it; and a gross insult to a veteran minister of the church, without the least semblance of modesty to mask it. This pamphlet was sent to the Vicar of Charles with a written letter, whether from the author is uncertain, for it was anonymous; but expressed in terms of no small acrimony.

In an appendix to the True Gospel,[a] the Doctor reviews this anonymous pamphlet, and states that the whole (except his many angry expressions) might be summed up in few words—that the true gospel of the Doctor's tract implied, that there is some other inability, than that of the will which prevents men from being saved; but, saith this self-named Verax, Jesus and his apostles knew of no other; they therefore taught, that in the rejection of the appointed salvation, men are inexcusable and self-condemned. All this to carnal reason looks very plausible; but, as the Doctor observes, 'here is free-will in the very quintessence of it. A doctrine, if true, which sets aside the necessity of the new birth altogether, and makes the grace of God to depend wholly upon the will of man.'

'Unmoved as I am with the least anger beyond the hectic of the moment, from the contents either of the pamphlet or the letter, yet,' saith he, 'the duty which I owe the church

[a] Vol. IX. page 483.

of God will not suffer me to remain silent under such aspersions. It is not from personal considerations I now write. I consider myself imperatively called forth to confirm and make good what I have written for the church's sake, which is Christ's body. It is his blessed cause for which I feel; his people's comfort for which I contend—it is of eternal consequence, that no child of God should be left to the peradventure and uncertainty of a yea and nay gospel.'

As to *conditional salvation*, if the salvation of a sinner is not in every respect unconditional, it cannot be in every respect of grace; for, as the reviewer in the Gospel Magazine observes,[a] 'grace would lose its very nature, if a single condition were annexed to it, and Paul's positive declarations would be false, Rom. xi. 5, 6. Eph. ii. 8. 2 Tim. i. 9.' As to *indiscriminate invitations and offers*, upon this point the Doctor enters largely in his appendix; and shews, that every address, offer, or invitation in the word of God is made to the church of God, under some special character; as *God's Israel*, or *his people*—to the *weary* and *heavy laden*—to him that is *athirst*—to him that *willeth*, that is, to him whom the Lord hath made *willing*. To preach the gospel, and to proclaim salvation in the audience of all sinners wheresoever they came, this was the apostle's commission. And the same will all faithful servants of the word do now, who are ordained by the Holy Ghost. To preach Christ, they knew to be their province; to persuade to the acceptance of Christ, they knew to be his. They used not "*enticing words* of man's wisdom," 1 Cor. ii. 4. As to *a sinner obtaining an interest in Christ by believing;* the reverse is the case. If he had not an interest in Christ before he believed, he would never attain unto it. "Faith is the gift of God." By this gift he attains to the knowledge of his interest in Christ. Men are not made the Lord's chosen because they believe, but because they are his chosen, therefore, it is given them

[a] Gospel Magazine for 1817, page 409.

to believe. Salvation does not commence in man's believing; but by the Holy Spirit's work on the heart, a man is brought to believe in Jesus. That there is some other inability than that of the will, which prevents men from being saved, is very evident; "For no man can come unto me," saith Christ, "except the Father who sent me draw him." "It is not of him that willeth," saith St. Paul, "nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," Rom. ix. 16. And again, "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded," Rom. xi. 7. Yet Verax is rash enough to state, that 'Jesus and his apostles *knew* of no other inability which prevents a man from being saved but the will.' And what greater obstacle to a man's salvation can there possibly be than this? Unless the Lord slay the enmity and controul the will, man never can be saved.

After a lapse of several months, another pamphlet was published, entitled, 'Truth Vindicated, or a Series of Remarks on some of the leading Doctrines of the Gospel, occasioned by Dr. Hawker's appendix to his True Gospel, by James Bidlake, alias Verax.' This induced the Doctor to send to the press his animadversions on this pamphlet, under the title of the 'True Portrait of Antinomianism, being an Admonitory Letter to the Rev. James Bidlake.' In vindication of what he had before stated, Mr. Bidlake quotes several passages of scripture to prove, that our Lord and his disciples made offers and invitations indiscriminately to all. The Doctor in turn shews, that the several passages which Mr. B. produces, either have not the character of invitations, or, if invitations, were made to persons of a special description, and not to all indiscriminately. In his zeal to run down his adversary, Mr. B. had unwarrantably asserted, that the Doctor not only forbade invitations to the unconverted, but 'discouraged even the declaration to them of what Christ hath done and suffered for sin.' 'This,' saith the Doctor, 'is contradictory to the whole tendency both of my preaching and writing; and you (addressing Mr. B.) knew the charge

to be false in the moment you made it.' It was certainly a gross perversion of the Doctor's words; but it is lamentable to witness how a prejudiced controversialist will sometimes pervert the truth to throw an odium on his adversary. This is not the only instance in this pamphlet of his, wherein Mr. B. bears false witness against his neighbour.

It seems to have given umbrage to this gentleman, that the worthy Vicar of Charles, spake so largely and so frequently on the doctrine of election; to justify himself in this particular, he shews, that he has eminent ensamples in holy writ—that the three Persons of the glorious Trinity not only attest, but are themselves preachers of the doctrine—that the apostles also were preachers of election. 'And shall I,' saith he, 'be apprehensive of error in following such examples? Shall I on this account dread that great day of God, when Jesus shall send his angels and gather his *elect* from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven?" Mark xiii. 27. Let those tremble who preach it not!'[a]

Although men cannot deny that the doctrines of election and predestination are scriptural doctrines, yet too many not only disrelish but absolutely hate them. But is it not an awful consideration, that it is the truth of God they hate, and the sovereignty of God they oppose? To discountenance these doctrines, and to deter others, if possible, from maintaining or professing them, it has been customary with men of the free-will school, to traduce such ministers as preach them, under the epithet of antinomians. 'This name,' saith the Doctor to Mr. B. 'hath been too frequently used by men of your description, as a bugbear to frighten the Lord's little ones. By confounding *libertinism* with *antinomianism*, and blending them together as one and the same, many godly persons have been distressed, and shrunk from the imputation of it, as considering it the greatest obloquy.'[b]

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[a] Vol. IX. page 528.

[b] Vol. IX. page 536.

Many are the definitions which have been given of this dreaded reproach; and as every one feels himself at liberty to annex his own ideas to the term, Mr. B. has exhibited his view of the subject, and the Doctor has subjoined his. An antinomian has been considered variously, as for instance, one who holds the truth in unrighteousness, one who sins that grace may abound, one who denies the law to be a rule of life, one who maintains justification without the deeds of the law, a godly minister who preaches the sovereignty of grace. That faithful servant of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Romaine, and others of the same school, have oftentimes been branded with this appellation. It is a term which has its dark shades and fair colourings, according to the taste of the artist who draws the portrait; but it is most commonly applied as a term of reproach to one, who like the apostle, declares, that the elect of God are "saved and called with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to the purpose and grace of God, which grace was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. And it has been so commonly applied to such characters, that it begins to lose its opprobrious stain.

Of its dark shades, Mr. Bidlake says, 'Were I required to give a definition of ancient and modern antinomianism in separate words, I should speak of it as an amalgama of irreligion, ignorance, conceit, pride, obstinacy, selfishness, and cowardice. It is moreover clamorous, morose, scornful, insolent, petulant, revengeful. It is the hot-bed of discord, and the most effectual promoter of religious feuds. It is a Diotrephes in the house of God, and a tyrant in the domestic circle. Where it attaches to dispositions naturally amiable, it converts them into bad ones; and it makes those who are naturally bad, intolerable.' He enters still more largely into the description, and gives a full length picture of the antinomian; but it is such a vile caricature, that no one could possibly recognize it, unless Mr. B. had written the name underneath. He represents him as exulting at infants being

in hell, a span long; as destitute of all natural affection; the most uncivilized, inhuman, cruel, unscriptural, and infernal of all spirits—'a more hideous spirit,' saith he, 'never escaped from the bottomless pit.'

But what does all this imply? or why was this black picture drawn and inserted in his 'Truth Vindicated,' unless thereby Mr. B. intended to vilify, stigmatize, and defame this good man's character? But where in all this is there a single feature that was prominent in the Vicar of Charles? I heard a respectable clergyman state, who knew nothing of Dr. Hawker but through the vile pamphlets published against him, that he had a perfect horror of his character until a poor old woman in the village where he resided, lent him a book, without a title-page, which proved to be Zion's Pilgrim. He was quite delighted with the book; but how great was his surprize, when he found it was the production of Dr. Hawker: and perhaps he would never have read it, had not the title-page been accidentally or intentionally torn off. Such slanderous pamphleteers as the Barrister, and Bidlake, and others, have taken a tremendous responsibility upon themselves, to be answerable at the bar of Christ, for the mischief they have done in blasting, in some places, where their foul mildews have fallen, this good man's usefulness. I wish not to give offence; but beseech them, if these Memoirs should come under their observation, to weigh the consequences.

Let the reader contrast his character, with the picture drawn by Mr. Bidlake of an antinomian. He is known to have been a man who lived near to God, well versed in holy scripture and in general literature, deeply acquainted with his own heart, humble in his deportment, ready to acknowledge his errors, liberal towards the poor, intrepid in his Master's cause. Though set for the defence of the gospel, he was neither obtrusive nor clamorous. In manners lively yet not volatile, courteous yet not temporizing. With a mind too enlarged to be petulant, and with feelings too softened to

be resentful; a lover of peace, and a promoter of christian charity. In the church, faithful to his charge, and firm in his purpose; yet no Diotrephes, for he loved and patronized the brethren, and they were willing of themselves to give him the pre-eminence. In his domestic circle, kind, affectionate, and indulgent. In his disposition, amiable, communicative, and tolerant; and if deemed intolerant, it was only by such as conscious of their improprieties feared his faithful rebuke, or bold in their opposition to the doctrines of grace knew that they should meet with his salutary correction. What he was, he was by the grace of God. Though I have lived more than half a century in the world, and have known not a few of the excellent of the earth, yet I have not met with one in whom appeared *more* of the man of God than Dr. Hawker. This is not written to eulogize the man, but "to glorify God in him," Gal. i. 24. I do not wish to represent him without faults, but who has not reason to lie low in the dust from a sense of his own?

Though in the many volumes of his works, we cannot but admire the reflected lustre of that grace which was bestowed upon him, yet it was not merely in his publications that his pre-eminent virtues shone; but he carried his religion into all the transactions and minutiæ of life. If he wrote a note on business, however brief that note, there was always something in it which evidenced the heavenly-mindedness of the man, and gave a dignity to the transaction. His chief business appeared to be, to exalt and glorify his Lord and Master; and nothing was more painful to him, than to be kept from the Lord's house, and the usual engagements of the Lord's day. Early in this year, 1818, he was confined to his house, if not to his chamber, from long and severe affliction. I have before me a brief note, which happens to be preserved, to illustrate and confirm what is here said of him through the affection which the gentleman felt towards him to whom it was written. It is a fair specimen to shew, how admirably and unostentatiously he blended the great

things of salvation with the minutest concerns of life. This gentleman was, I believe, at that time one of the church-wardens of the parish of Charles; and the mere purport of the note was to request him to call before he attended the vestry; yet here we may see, how lovely religion appears when mixed up with our common intercourse with men, and how feasible this is, under the teaching of our heavenly Master.

'April 13, 1818.

'Dear Sir,

'Grace be with you. Probably you mean to attend the vestry to-morrow; if so, will you do me the favour to call upon me before you go. I should save you the trouble were I able, but I am still a prisoner, though the Lord's prisoner. Well is it for me, that the chain is golden; and that He is graciously looking in upon me, to smile upon me with his love; or my heart would have broken. *Thirteen* Lord's days kept from the Lord's house! My love to your dear wife, and the sweet prattling interesting little boy. Jesus bless them and you.

'Your's, dear Sir, in the Lord,

'Robert Hawker.'

To John Moor, Esq. Foxhall.

Seeing that his enemies, or rather the enemies of the truth as it is in Jesus, notwithstanding his exemplary life, were determined to designate him an antinomian preacher; in the 'Admonitory Letter' to Mr. Bidlake, he draws the portrait of what he considered a true antinomian according to the scriptures of God; and then assures his adversary, that under this description of character he was willing to bear his reproach. 'The word antinomian,' saith he, 'is well known to be formed from a greek compound, *anti-nomos;* the nearest literal translation of which is, *against law.* And the meaning, when applied to any person in relation to religion is, that he who is an antinomian is looking for justification before God solely on the footing of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness, without an eye to the deeds of the law, yea,

even against them. This, in the scripture sense of the word, is the definition of a real antinomian.'[a]

'A true antinomian,' he therefore argues, 'according to the etymology of the word, is looking for justification before God solely on the footing of Christ's righteousness. Unless, therefore, the Holy Ghost hath quickened him from the death of sin, and made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, brought him into a feeling sense of the plague of his own heart, so that he loathes himself in his own sight, and is led by sovereign grace to behold Christ in all the beauties, glories, and infinite excellencies of his person, and the suitableness, fulness, and all-sufficiency of his redemption-work, for the accomplishment of salvation; this man cannot be said, in opposition to the law as a covenant of works, to be looking to and living upon Christ, his blood and righteousness, as Jehovah's covenant of grace. And if he doth not so live and so act, he hath not "the faith of God's elect," neither can be called with truth an antinomian.'[b]

Having thus defined an antinomian, as one who seeks no justification by the law, and whose life is not inconsistent with a sound profession, he then asks, 'Who (in this view of the picture) in the latter ages of the church, in the gospel day, ever stood so high under the banner of antinomianism as the apostle Paul? The name given him, by way of opprobrium, was that of "the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," Acts xxvi. 5. But had he lived in our day, neither his apostleship, nor the inspiration with which the Holy Ghost had endowed him, would have exempted him from the more reproachful name, *the ringleader of the antinomians.*' He, therefore, admonishes the real followers of the Lord 'no longer to shrink from the charge of antinomianism, because men who know not the Lord use it as a term of reproach to the Lord's people. While the Lord keeps you, according to his promise, from falling, their

[a] Vol. IX. page 542.

[b] Vol. IX. page 544.

attempting to blend *libertinism* with *antinomianism* will be to their own confusion. And to be an antinomian upon true gospel principles is a badge of peculiar honour, in the present awful day of rebuke and blasphemy.'

In the conclusion of his letter, he thus addresses Mr. B. 'And now, sir, for the present I take my leave of you; our cause will have a hearing in due season, and the Lord will judge between me and you. In the meantime, you have my full consent (as far as my power extends to grant it) to call me antinomian, and to write it too on my forehead; yea, if your conscience will allow you, you may add to it all the harsh epithets you have given of antinomianism, and add as many more as your fancy can suggest. Blessed be God! I have more than consolation enough to bear me up under all. In relation to God, I can truly say with Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, I have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also I have access by faith into this grace wherein I stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1, 2. And in relation to man—the kindness, favour, and affection of all with whom I am acquainted, and especially in the town and parish where I have spent more than half a century, are ample balance to all the abuse thrown upon me by persons of your complexion. And while the Lord speaks peace, it matters not who declares war; while he is near who justifieth me, I care not who condemns me.'

In 1818, was published another pamphlet, entitled, 'More Work for Dr. Hawker, or a Reply to his Misrepresentations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, contained in two Tracts, entitled, The True Gospel, and Appendix to the True Gospel, by the Rev. Thomas Smith, of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Master of Gordon House Academy, Kentish Town, Middlesex.' 'This religious squib,' says the reviewer in the Gospel Magazine, 'is as complete a take-in upon the credulity of the public, as we ever remember witnessing. After placarding the walls of the metropolis with large

posting-bills, sending letters to private houses, with advertisements in the public papers and magazines, announcing in a plagiarism title, 'More Work for Dr. Hawker,' out issues from the press a pamphlet of twenty-four pages for one shilling; four of which are devoted to the title, two in puffing off his school, with about four in quotations.' Thus leaving a residue not very voluminous to employ the attention or the pen of the Vicar of Charles.

This pamphlet the Doctor acknowledges in a letter of thanks to Mr. Smith; but complains, 'that the contents did not correspond with the title-page. For having in vain looked over the pamphlet from beginning to end, to find somewhat corresponding to the title-page which might open to him employment, he tells us he was just on the point of giving it up as a lost pursuit, not being able to find any thing to do, till turning his eyes to the advertisement on the last leaf, he amuses himself and the reader with some animadversions on the prospectus of his plan of education.'[a]

It is to be feared, that mere adventurers, who wished from some sinister motive to obtrude themselves to public notice, have availed themselves of attacking the Doctor's character or writings, from a persuasion that any book would sell which bore his name on the title-page. And hence, climbing the pedestal of his popularity, have made an exhibition of their talents and of their follies too, aiming thereby to court the world's applause, or to make a gain of godliness. It is not my province to sit in judgment on Mr. Smith's *motive*; but he was certainly never intended for a polemical divine, nor yet for a classical critic. He tells the Doctor, 'that he has endeavoured to prove from scripture, that the Doctor's assertion, that *the gospel is not to be preached to sinners*, is not true.' In all the Doctor's works there is no such an assertion to be found. The thought never entered his mind. The gospel not to be preached to sinners!! In what field

[a] See Vol. IX. page 565.

did he glean this idea? What a folly is it for men, who know not how to distinguish terms, to exhibit themselves as combatants in controversial divinity!

This blunder of his reminds me of another which he has made in *his* edition of the Eton Latin Grammar, which, though irrelevant to the subject, shews the man. Every latin scholar knows, that the terminal letters of the several declensions and conjugations in the grammar are set off with an hyphen, to shew the learner what letters he must alter in forming other words on the same construction; as for instance, *regn-um*, a kingdom; *regn-i*, of a kingdom, &c. But so ignorant is Mr. Smith of the purpose of this set off, that he gravely tells the public, in his preface to a new edition of his own correction, that '*the division of syllables* in the *Eton Grammar*, is on an average wrong in more than nine instances in every ten.' But who, save himself, ever conjectured that these set offs were intended as *divisions of syllables?* Yet, as a critic on the Eton Grammar, he has absolutely reduced them to syllables, to the no small perplexity of the poor boy, who is thereby at a loss what terminals to alter. May not this edition be well entitled, 'More Work for Dr. Keate.' It is lamentable, that men of so little discernment should presume to write critiques on the Eton Grammar, or to enter the list of theological controversy with such men as Dr. Hawker.

In his appendix to his little tract, entitled, 'The True Gospel no Yea Nay Gospel,' the Doctor maintains, 'that in the example of our Lord and his apostles, the preachers of the gospel find no authority whatever to make *offers* or *invitations*, in an *indiscriminate* manner, to sinners in general; neither do the scriptures furnish a single instance, where Christ and his apostles have ever made offers but to the people of God.'[a] This, Mr. Smith, as well as Mr. Bidlake, endeavours to disprove. But it is evident, that neither of

[a] Vol. IX. page 487.

them fully understood his terms; for they both drew the conclusion, that he maintained that the gospel was not to be *preached* to sinners in general. This is a most unwarrantable gloss on his words. The Doctor's objection against making tenders of grace, and offers of salvation, and indiscriminate invitations to all, is not levelled so much against the mere act itself, although of this he disapproves, because there is no commission or warrant so to do; as against the heterodoxy which lies concealed under this practice. For it presupposes, that man, in his natural state, is not so far dead in trespasses and sins, as to be unable to fall in with these tenders, invitations, and offers: but, that he is able to do this, which is both pleasing and acceptable to God. Mr. Smith must presuppose this, or his offers are inefficient, futile, and vain. If he presuppose this, he holds a doctrine which the tenth article of the church denies!

If every man in his natural state is able to fall in with these tenders, invitations, and offers of grace, then every man in his natural state must have grace enough to do this, or can do it without grace. If he have grace enough to do this, then every natural man has grace. But who does not see the fallacy of this conclusion? If Mr. Smith will not submit to the absurdity of this conclusion, that every natural man has grace, he must fall on the other horn of the dilemma, and acknowledge that every natural man can do this without grace. If he have grace, why make him an offer of grace, as if he had it not? If he have no grace, and can fall in with the offers of grace, he is not wholly dead in trespasses and sins; and moreover, he can act faith before he receive the grace of Christ. Wretched divinity! Although I have taken the liberty in this argument to use Mr. Smith's name, it is not intended to apply only to him, but to all who maintain that offers and invitations are to be made in an *indiscriminate* manner to sinners in general. This doctrine of theirs sets aside the need of regeneration, and makes God's purpose depend on man's will.

I cannot dismiss this article without observing, that some respect was certainly due from Mr. Smith to a minister of Christ, venerable for his age, walking in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless, and greatly honoured of God in the ministry of his word; but he by no means intreats him as an elder, but adds insults to his ungenerous, uncandid, and unjust rebukes. In the 7th page, he saith, 'I should not 'despair of convincing you of the falsity of your assertion, 'had you not unhappily learned the art of equivocating and 'shuffling when a direct answer is required, and also that of 'wresting the scriptures, and causing them to speak what-'ever your fanciful mind dictates.' Also, in page 16: 'You 'have confessed that your judgment is imperfect, for you 'see, even in your latest publications, enough to lament over, 'and pray the Lord to pardon. Certainly you do not ima-'gine that your confession will obtain credit. Indeed, it is a 'feigned humility mixed with pride.' I might produce more equally insulting; but let these two quotations suffice. And may grace be given to the writer of the above uncharitable remarks to see, even in his own publication, enough to lament over, and pray the Lord to pardon!

Under the grace of that Spirit, whose anointing teacheth of all things, he acquired, from the constant perusal of the word of God, clearer views of the doctrines of truth, and saw and sometimes regretted, that his former publications did not contain so full a testimony as could be given to the doctrines he espoused. This no doubt induced him to send to the press his 'Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost,' some years after he had published his 'Sermons on His Divinity and Operations.' Though blended with a benevolent motive, he published the Lectures on a more limited plan, to render the book sufficiently cheap for the poor man to purchase. From the same motive, he published in the year 1819, 'The Personal Testimony of God the Father to the Person, Godhead, and Sonship of God the Son, as set forth in the scriptures of God the Holy Ghost

—an everlasting truth of unspeakable blessedness to the church of God in all ages; but of peculiar sweetness in the present awful day of a Christ-despising generation.' Although he had many years previously published his 'Sermons on the Divinity of Christ,' yet his 'Personal Testimony' is sent forth 'compressed,' he tells us, 'into as small a compass as possible for humble pockets.' The preface bears the date of April the 13th, his birth-day, which he has ofttimes made memorable in his various publications.

After having shewn from the holy scriptures, the greatness and the glory of this 'Personal Testimony,' he speaks of the immense blessings included in the sonship of the children of God, from their *adoption-character* in God's dear Son. As if, in writing the conclusion of this work on his birth-day, he had been reminded of his earthly alliance, he proceeds to speak most sweetly of the glorious results of his heavenly alliance. 'And as the men of the world,' saith he, 'carry themselves proudly from their carnal alliances, and are very fond of letting every one know if they have connexions with the great ones of the earth; so would I desire, that all men should discover by my life and conversation, that my alliance is heavenly; being, by regeneration, brought into the high privilege of my adoption-character in Christ Jesus, and rank among "the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty!" 2 Cor. vi. 18.' 'This indeed,' continues he, is a relationship which beggars every other. This is an affinity which all the proud annals of the world cannot boast; yea, compared to which time itself is nothing, and will sink into everlasting forgetfulness before it. For when we shall have done with this dying, sinful, sorrowful world; yea, when we shall not only have entered heaven, and lived ages beyond the remembrance of all things here below, our sonship will be the same, from our union with God's dear Son; and he that is our God and Father *now*, will be our God and Father *then*, and our portion for ever.'[a]

[a] Vol. III. page 610.

In the year 1818, a pamphlet was published, entitled, 'The Antiquity of Jesus, or his Pre-existence defended, in a Letter to the Rev. R. Hawker, D.D. &c. by John Stevens, Minister of York Street Chapel, St. James', London.' This was occasioned by some remarks made by him in his 'Second Lecture on the Holy Ghost,' respecting the *human soul* of Christ. It appears, from the Doctor's Letter to Mr. Stevens, published soon after, that at the time when he published this Lecture, he had never heard of any one who espoused the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence in an human soul, but the followers of Sabellius, the Libyan. He, therefore, had thus expressed himself:—that 'some men *untaught of God the Holy Ghost*, have fallen into dreams of their own imagination, and ventured to propose I know not what sort of phantasy, of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, prior to his incarnation.' At which language, Mr. Stevens had taken some umbrage. By way of explanation, the Doctor therefore gives this information, and observes:—'In my view of one tenet of the sect I included the whole, and deemed it what I still consider it to be, an awful heresy.'

Mr. Stevens appears, in all the leading doctrines of the gospel, sound in the faith; and therefore, the worthy Vicar of Charles meets him on friendly terms. 'I am sorry,' says the Doctor, 'to note an error in your title-page. I have before observed, that the single point of contention (and that I hope a friendly one) between you and me, is whether Christ had or had not a pre-existent *human soul*. But whoever reads the title-page of your Letter would at once conclude, that Dr. Hawker denies the pre-existence of Christ, than which nothing can be more foreign to the truth.'[a]

The most prominent arguments which the Doctor advances against this system (for I need not produce the whole of them) are:—that the Holy Ghost is silent on the subject throughout all the scriptures of truth—"that Christ took not

[a] Vol. IX. page 446.

on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham," meaning thereby the whole of human nature. But if the human soul of Christ was united to the Godhead of Christ four thousand years before his incarnation, he did not in the fulness of time take on him our nature, but only half of our nature, *the mere body*. " It behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren in all things ;" which could not be the case, if, according to Mr. Stevens' system, the nature of Christ is made up of an *human soul*, begotten before the world, and an *human body* born in time.

' I know not how it strikes you,' saith he, ' but with me, I confess, that instead of those sweet constraining affections to draw to Christ, which the precious doctrine of God incarnate, taking into union my whole nature, awakens through grace in my soul ; I should feel a distance and shyness in the contemplation of the human soul of Christ, without a body, as existing before all worlds. Neither can I make out any relationship between this part of Christ's human nature and ours, to give the confidence of drawing nigh to him. Indeed, as the scripture informs me, that he was to be " made in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God," Heb. ii. 17.—as long as I considered his human soul not so made, I could not reconcile it to myself, that, under my soul-travail and soul-exercises, he could enter into my feelings by his own ! But, as long as I look to Jesus as God the Holy Ghost instructs me to look to him, as taking into union with his Godhead a nature both of soul and body, made of the same materials as my own, yet without sin ; I feel a boldness to go to him at all times, and upon all occasions, as one that not only *knows* as God, but *feels* as man ; and can and will grant the suited " grace to help in all time of need." '[a]

A second Letter was soon after published by Mr. Stevens, in which he animadverts on the contents of the Doctor's

[a] Vol. IX. page 460.

first Letter. Some of the remarks are on subjects extraneous to the point in debate. In defence of his system, Mr. Stevens often quotes an appellation given to the Lord Jesus, Rev. iii. 14, "The *beginning* of the creation of God;" as if the word, αρχη, which is translated *beginning*, was to be interpreted, *the first production* of the creation of God, or *the first thing created;* whereas it expresses the divinity of Christ as the *cause*, *origin*, or *author* of the creation of God. And it has this interpretation also in the Greek classics; as in Homer, where Paris is said to be the *cause*, *origin*, or *author* of the Trojan war:—

Ἐπεὶ κακὰ πολλὰ πέποσθε
Εἵνεκ' ἐμῆς ἔριδος, καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἕνεκ' ἀρχῆς.

"Since for my quarrel all these ills ye bear,
And for King Priam's Son, the *author* of the war."—*Iliad* iii. 100.

As Paris was the arché or origin of the Trojan war, so Christ was the arché or origin of the creation of God. This text by no means favours the hypothesis, that the human soul of Christ was the first production of the creation of God.

In reply to Mr. Stevens' second Letter, the Doctor still demands proofs from holy scripture, which he maintains Mr. S. has not given. 'Besides, by this faith,'[a] saith he, 'I am taught to believe, that the Son of God took into union with himself, in his divine nature, an human soul without a body before the world; and an human body without a soul in time; many ages and generations passing in the interval of these distinct acts: holy scripture all the while neither relating such things, or explaining the causes of them. Moreover, by this assumption of an human soul without a body before the world, for the purpose of the office of mediator; such a mediator is not the mediator which the word of God reveals; for there we are told, that "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 15. But this

[a] Vol. IX. page 467.

mediator is not God and man; for a soul without a body doth not constitute manhood.' The Doctor, after explaining a passage in his 'Poor Man's Commentary,' on the book of Judges, as not applying to this point of debate, takes of him a friendly farewell.

Mr. Stevens, in this controversy, which was carried on with much firmness and much temper on both sides, shews himself to be a man of considerable talent, much learning, and real piety; but he evidently has not a right apprehension of the formularies of our church; and although he disapproves of the baptism of infants, I beg leave to state, that he has no better scriptural authority for admitting females to the Lord's Supper than we have for admitting infants to the rite of baptism! Many of his views of biblical truth, I prize, admire, and cherish, and bless the Lord for the comfort and support which under the divine favour, they administer; but in other minor things, we must agree to differ. May the uniting, enriching, and harmonizing grace of the Spirit be with all them who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth!

In the year 1820, another of his publications was presented to the church of Christ, bearing for its date the memorable 13th of April. It has the title of 'The Poor Man's Prayer-Book, formed from God's Scripture-Book; in which is proved, that all true spiritual and personal communion with God is the sole result of the gift of God, and not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, (2 Cor. ii. 13.) affectionately recommended to the church of God, and intended as a Supplement to a little work, some time since sent forth among the Lord's people, entitled, The Poor Man's Morning and Evening Portions, for the use of the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.' His chief design seems to be to remind the regenerated child of God (for of such only he repeatedly tells us he speaks) of his high privilege, to take with him words from God's own records; and to draw near in faith, nothing doubting. 'Let his present circumstances,' saith he, 'be

what they may, either under depression or the reverse, in this precious book of God he will discover expressions so exactly suited to his own personal situation, as are the most calculated of all others wherewith he may come and present himself and his concerns before the Lord. As if a gracious God designed (and which is indeed the case) that the Lord's people should speak to the Lord in the Lord's own words. For in truth, (and it is a truth which can never be too often nor too strongly impressed upon the mind), we can say nothing to God, that is profitable to us in a way of prayer or praise; but what God hath first said to us, in a way of grace and love.'[a]

His volumes are in general much enriched from the candour and freedom with which he speaks his own experience in spiritual things. In speaking of those 'shuttings-up of the soul in seasons of prayer at one time, and enlargement at another,' which he has felt, he reminds us of our own; and though we feel humbled for our deadness, and coldness, and barrenness, yet there is something reviving in the thought, that our experience is not solitary. 'For my own part,' saith he, 'I find cause to bless God for those occasional heart-straitenings and self-emptiness which I feel. And very sure I am, that by such spiritual exercises God the Holy Ghost is teaching me to profit. I feel the better, and know the better, the blessedness of the Lord's strength, being made perfect in creature weakness. It is the sun's absence or presence which produceth the different effects of darkness or light in the earth. And all the day-light in the soul is solely induced by the Lord the Sun of righteousness. Oh! then it is blessed to call to mind the unchangeable love of the eternal Three in One, when, in our approaches to the mercy-seat, we can only lay low in the dust before God, and utter a few broken sighs and self-reproaches of unworthiness.'[b] It is well also to remember, what he very sweetly observes on this subject:

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[a] Vol. VII. page 321.

[b] Vol. VII. page 350.

'It is not our preparedness or our enlargements of spirit, which become the cause of our acceptance before God; neither our heart-straitenings or being shut up, preventions to acceptance. It is indeed good to feel and to enjoy at times the goings forth of the soul in the actual exercises of grace; but then these are but the *effects* and not the *cause* of divine favour.'

In 1821, appeared his 'Letter to an Undergraduate, on the subject of the Bishop of Peterborough's Questions to the Candidates of his Diocese for admission into Holy Orders.' 'Although,' says the Doctor, 'it be not my province to say, how far another man may or may not be warranted by law to frame questions on the articles, and to make the result of those questions in the answers given, according to his judgment, the basis of admission to or rejection from the ministry of the church of England, yet is it my province as much as his, to use an equal freedom in relation to the articles, which I have signed; and to shew that in themselves when accepted in their own pure, genuine, and artless language, undisguised and unvarnished by any commentators; they are too plain and too palpable to admit of a different construction from their first and most obvious meaning. That beautiful style of simplicity which distinguishes the writings in the era of our good old Reformers of blessed memory, and which, more or less runs through the whole of the articles, manifest that they were *then* as they are *now*, calculated and as they were designed, for popular apprehension. They are like the prophet's vision, and as if the Lord who watched over him guided them, and as they wrote held their pens and said, as to him, "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it," Hab. ii. 3.

'Indeed it would raise a blush,' continues he, 'in my wrinkled face, old and nearly worn out as it is, were it otherwise. I should shrink from the attack, with more alarm than the sensitive plant from the touch, were it possible for any man, and especially among the writers of modern divinity, to produce the shadow of a proof against the

articles taken from the scriptures of God. I should tremble more than the Roman governor did under Paul's preaching, could it be now shown at my going out of life, that those doctrines were false, which in acknowledging the articles I subscribed to at my entrance in. And what an accumulation of foreboding would the very idea, like a spectre haunting the conscience, raise to my mind, which no exorcisms of preferment could quiet, had my subscription to the articles been then *pro forma*, to obtain the favour of men; unconscious and unconcerned at such awful duplicity in the sight of God!

'But I bless God, charges of this nature are not with me. I have lived too long, and laboured too hard in the word and doctrine of sound truth, within the walls of the establishment; yea, and both felt and enjoyed in my own soul, and beheld in the blessed effects on others, those great things accompanying salvation, too strongly witnessed by the teaching and sealing of the Lord the Spirit, to need any other conviction. True indeed the articles of our establishment, derive their legitimate sanction from the law of the land: and while that law continueth what it is, and unrepealed, its enactments are as binding and obligatory, or ought to be, as in the days of the Reformers. But I hail those ancient records of our church, and venerate them much more in that they have for the soundness of their doctrine yet an infinitely higher authority in the word of God; and bring with them their full credentials from being in perfect harmony with the faith once delivered unto the saints.'[a]

He proceeds to animadvert on a few of the more obnoxious questions which are found among the eighty-nine. His plan is, *first*, to bring forward for inspection the article; *secondly*, the scripture proofs of its soundness; and *thirdly*, to shew how far the questions proposed thereon are or are not framed on scriptural ground. On the doctrine of the *Trinity*, it is asked, 'what is the *office* of God the Father—what is the *office*

[a] Vol. IX. page 279.

of God the Son—and what is the *office* of God the Holy Ghost?' On these questions, the Doctor observes, 'is there not somewhat very degrading in the term *office* when spoken in reference to either of the persons in Jehovah?' He was always jealous lest any man should be unsound in this article of faith, and had a quickness of perception to discover it. On the 17th, it is asked by the Bishop, *inter alia*, 'If it be not a contradiction both to scripture and to this article, to assert that the decrees of God are absolute, or that the election on the part of God has no reference to foreseen good conduct on the part of man?' But what saith the scripture? "He is of one mind, and who can turn him!" Job xxiii. 13. Hence God's unchangeableness renders nothing which he hath predestinated liable to any peradventures from the mutability of man. If a man be elected of God unto salvation for good works foreseen, he is as much chosen of God and saved for good works as if the election were deferred till the works were done; but the apostle tells us, "it is not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 9. There is no uncertainty as to the number of the elect. On the doctrine of original, or birth sin, it is asked, 'whether the frequent repetition of the doctrine, that we are not only *far gone* from righteousness, but are nothing better than a mass of mere corruption and depravity, have not a tendency to destroy all sense of virtue and moral goodness?' 'If so,' saith the Doctor, 'God himself must answer it; for he commands his faithful servants "to cry aloud and spare not, to lift up their voice like a trumpet, and shew his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins," Isa. lviii. 1. Until grace be given, there is no disposition to virtue or moral goodness; for the Holy Ghost testifieth, that "there is none that seeketh after God;" but when a change is wrought by grace, it is said, that "according to the divine power, there is given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto glory and virtue," 2 Pet. i. 3.

There is, in the close of this 'Letter to the Undergraduate,' a suitable admonition to all candidates for admission into ecclesiastical orders, not to make any undue concessions, nor to adopt any improper measures; but to commit all in prayer to the wisdom and sovereignty of God. In reference to these questions which he had discussed, he thus writes to his young friend:—'The views which the Lord hath given you in divine things, will not suffer you to pay the toll demanded at this newly erected gate. But you have a never-failing resource in the sovereignty of God. If the Lord hath designed you and ordained you, as he did *Jeremiah* from the womb for this service, in due time the Lord will appear for his own glory. There is "a set time to favour Zion." "He that hath the key of David will set before you an open door, and no man can shut it." And until this is done, it were to run unsent, which is among the most awful and portentous signs of the present day. In the meanwhile, to call to mind those blessed words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, "In your patience possess ye your souls!" The very dispensation will be sanctified, if it leads you to rest more on the divine faithfulness, and to study more the divine sovereignty. "Be still, and know that I am God." And never for a moment lose sight of this unquestionable truth, namely, that the Lord's hand is in every appointment of the Lord's providences. Men are but instruments for bringing about the sacred purposes of his will; yea, and sometimes they are made the unconscious instruments of accomplishing the very reverse of what they themselves intend. It will be your mercy upon this and every other occasion, if you can look off from man and repose yourself in God. That is a precious scripture, and was not recorded for nothing, when one under peculiar straitenings could and did say, "I will cry unto God Most High, unto God that performeth all things for me," Ps. lvii. 2.'[a]

[a] Vol. IX. page 352.

In 1822 was published his 'Scripture Extracts, accompanied with notes and observations, from some of the most striking historical parts of Holy Scripture.' In these Extracts, we have some interesting sketches of some particular incidents in the annals of scripture worthies, which are drawn with much vigour and animation. One of his reviewers remarks of them, that they might with propriety be called, 'Scripture Portraits.' Among these Scripture Portraits, there are some beautiful sketches of the Lord Jesus himself, together with some prominent object of his benevolence, as originally set forth by the unerring pencil of divine truth. In all these portraits the outlines are admirably depicted, in which there is strength without harshness, and boldness blended with the finest touches of his masterly skill. The colouring has less of earthly taint than the productions of most who are considered proficients in theological limnings. The prominency of the features therein given to each, leaves no room for mistake for whom the portraits are intended. The embellishments are in strict accordance with the whole design, in which there is nothing foreign, nothing fantastic, nothing frivolous; if there be superfluity, it enriches rather than encumbers; if the same embellishments occur again and again in the several pictures, they are too well adjusted to offend. We may learn from the best authority, that the models of all these characters, before the Almighty Power of God had formed the realities, were exhibited and arranged under the direction of infinite wisdom, in the council-chambers of eternity before the earth was. And well may we fall low in the dust before him, who ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will, overwhelmed with the review of his knowledge and goodness, if in the development of his mercy and grace it be demonstrated, that ourselves were grouped among the number, and our names written in the Lamb's book of life.

With a view to draw attention to subjects of the deepest interest, our worthy friend composed these Extracts, in the

hope, that this little volume, (for at first it was but one) might be permitted to find a place on the table or in the window, where larger publications might be inadmissible. 'The friend while waiting for his friend in the parlour, the man of business, or the traveller stopping at an inn, the youth from school, or the servants in the kitchen, with a great variety of other characters which constitute the different departments in life, might by such means meet with this publication, and derive pleasure and profit from the perusal.' 'And as it hath been known, that sometimes and not unfrequently a word or portion from holy scripture, when unexpectedly brought to the view, hath been made particularly useful; the present selection is done with the hope, that similar events may be found now to follow, and from the Lord's blessing on the Lord's word, his gracious promise may be fulfilled in many an instance, when he saith, "I am sought of them that asked not for me, I am found of them who sought me not," Isa. lxv. 1.'[a]

We may learn from this preface to the first volume, how widely his views were extended to benefit every class of society, and how large his efforts were to do good, if so be that the Lord would be pleased to favour his designs. When these Extracts were sent first to the press, no more, in point of bulk, than a small volume was intended; and they were sold in numbers, that they might come within the reach of the labouring classes. 'That a *second* volume hath followed, is to be ascribed,' saith he, 'to the partiality with which the *first* hath been received; a large impression of which having been disposed of, and a new edition called for, before the second volume went to press.' 'And if the work be found to minister in the Lord's hand to the Lord's glory, in the spiritual benefit of the Lord's people, a renewed testimony will be thereby given, that the Lord's strength is made perfect in human weakness.'[b]

At the opening of the year 1823, his first production, a

[a] Vol. V. page 2.

[b] Vol. V. page 356.

usual, was a 'Token of Remembrance to the Church of Christ.' After having enlarged on his subject, which was founded on Ps. xvi. 5. "The death of the Lord's saints precious in the Lord's sight"—with an elegant simplicity he observes, 'For myself at my advanced years, I can only say, that walking, as I now am daily, on the confines of time, and on the look out for the eternal world, I am in expectation of soon realizing in open vision what I now live upon by faith. And in thus greeting the church of our most glorious Christ on the entrance of another year with this subject, I would, with all thankfulness to God and unfeigned humility of soul, desire grace to make use of the beloved apostle's words, and say, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." The bread which I eat, and find good for food, may safely be recommended to others. The stream from which I have slaked my thirst, when blessed by the same Almighty Giver, cannot but be found salutary to all who drink of it. The Lord of all spiritual life and health open the new year to his whole spiritual church, and prepare every individual of his mystical body for what he is preparing for them; "that whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 8.'[a]

In describing the life of so laborious a writer, we meet with less of incident than in the life of others whose avocations are less confined to the arm-chair in the study; but, advanced as he now was to his seventieth year, his mind was as vigorous and his pen as active as ever. Eight Sermons were published by him this year, under the title of '*Sacramental Meditations*,' being the substance of a course of sermons, occasionally delivered in the church of Charles, before the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. On the Saturday evening preceding the administration of this holy ordinance, he usually preached a sermon on the occasion, and it was

[a] Vol. VII. page 550.

found to be to many a profitable opportunity. Many of other communions not unfrequently attended. In the preface, he speaks as one mindful of his change, and ready to depart at his Master's call. 'The lease of my life,' saith he, 'according to scripture tenure, (Ps. xc. 10.) being nearly run out, and unable, from increasing years and increasing infirmities, to hope much longer the going in and out, as I have done for nearly half a century, with the Lord's people, in the ordinance of the Holy Supper, I have thought, to gather up the fragments which have been used on those occasions, might not be unacceptable neither unprofitable under the Lord's blessing. I dare not regret that my life is nearly over, and that my labours are nearly finished. Indeed, indeed I rejoice in the prospect. Through the tender mercy of my God, I have had my day, and a long day of mercies from the Lord it has been. And as one well fed and nourished at the Lord's table, whenever the bountiful Lord of the feast shall command the cloth to be removed, sure I am, through his grace enabling me, I shall arise, return thanks, and depart.'[a]

Many a year had elapsed since our Zion's Pilgrim had closed his narrative, the last sheet of which was given to the public, in 'Zion's Trumpet,' for October, 1800. During *fourteen* of these years which had intervened, he was much occupied in writing his 'Commentary on the Bible;' in which it may be seen, that he was no alien to Zion's commonwealth, and no stranger to Zion's honoured King. Other productions numerous and various, the chief of which have been already noticed, remain the monuments of his unwearied industry, fertile mind, ardent zeal, and spiritual affluence. He was rich towards God; for the Lord had made him a steward of many things, which he dispensed to others. His seventieth birth-day, which occurred this year, was a day that under the Lord's blessing had awakened in his soul many pleasing and profitable reflections; which induced him to reassume after a

[a] Vol. II. page 402.

long pause his instructive narrative, and to add a few more chapters to that truly interesting work. '*Zion's Pilgrim from the age of Seventy,*' first appeared in the Gospel Magazine, for November, 1823; the editors of which have held up his hands amidst all the calumnies and falsehoods with which he has been unjustly assailed and basely traduced. The Lord reward them for this labour of love, and make the last days of their pilgrimage like his, holy, honourable, and happy. He spent them in the suburbs of heaven.

The religious world hailed the continuation of Zion's Pilgrim's narrative with much pleasure. As I wish to make our venerable friend as much as possible his own historian in this work, especially where he enters more fully into the history of his mind, I again assume a liberty which I have often indulged, to subjoin a few quotations.[a] 'The day in which I finished my *seventieth* year, was rendered,' saith he, 'doubly memorable to call forth praise, in that it was also *the Lord's day*. And in the first moment of recollection, after a night of sweet sleep given me by the Lord, when I had blessed him for the same and all his mercies, the thought crossed my mind, that the Lord having added another year to my eventful life, had now, according to his own measurement by his standard of scripture, completed in me the age of man appointed upon earth, and numbered my days of *threescore years and ten*. And the idea involuntarily rose therefrom, that if the same gracious God which had borne me, as on eagles' wings thus far, were now to close my pilgrimage, the inscription on the stone which marked the spot of my burial ground, (if peradventure any tablet were given me) would have engraven on it *seventy years!* To what a length of time hath my life been extended! The very consideration called up a train of thoughts, which, in quick succession, like the coming tide, wave after wave, rushed in upon my mind with overwhelming power. My heart melted within

[a] Vol. III. page 133.

me, as the several images passed and re-passed before my imagination. The grave-stone which covers my dust may indeed tell the number of my days, but who can count the number of the Lord's mercies towards me? What arithmetic can be found competent to enumerate and sum up in all the multiplied instances the aggregate of the Lord's goodness and my undeservings? How incalculable the one! How immeasurable the other!

'I now stand as upon an isthmus. I am arrived to the stated boundary of time marked in scripture, and the eternal world is opening before me. I feel, I know, the seeds of death are ripening within me. The pins of my earthly tabernacle are daily loosening; and the whole fabric, if the Lord appoint it not to fall in at once, is gradually taking down from continual dilapidations. Is it not high time for me to be on the look out for my Lord's coming? and while the Lord is thus undressing me for the grave, I may behold him no less dressing my spirit "with his garments of salvation, and his robe of righteousness," Isa. lxi. 10. It is true indeed, that during the long lease I have already had by the divine grant, I have held it solely on the pleasure of him, "in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways." And had the bountiful Lord, at any one period of the term, withdrawn the principle of life he first in his free grace gave, and from the same cause hath ever since continued; and had the Lord issued an ejectment, and without a moment's warning, I could not justly have complained of wrong; neither would the Lord's goodness have been thereby rendered, in the smallest degree, impeachable. Nevertheless, from indwelling corruption, nature is too apt to murmur at divine dispensations, when at any time the Lord's appointments run counter to flesh and blood. It is very blessed, therefore, when the redeemed and regenerated people of God are brought not only into a full submission to the Lord's sovereignty, but into somewhat more than this; namely, to know, that that sovereignty is everlastingly exercised for their welfare. Such

views lead the mind, when taught of God, how to appreciate divine mercies; yea, and to discern mercies where carnal minds would discover nothing but evil. Death is in the believer's inventory of good as truly as life; neither can he enter into the joy of his Lord, but by passing through the same valley of the grave as his Lord hath passed before him. Do I not know, that until the Lord bring my *body* down to the grave, I shall never be free from the being and indwelling of sin? Until I sleep in Jesus, the inherency of original sin, which is the very core, the very elixir of my fallen nature, will never dry up. And in relation to my soul, until I am disembodied, never shall I enjoy uninterrupted communion with the Lord; neither those longings and desires of my mind after Christ in all their vast capaciousness be filled, until I see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!

'To return therefore to the original idea, which first opened to my mind on having finished my *seventy years;* the prospect now of an early departure, tended under grace to awaken suitable and becoming apprehensions for the remaining days of my pilgrimage, whether many or few, as to be found in a waiting frame when the time should come.' 'I have before observed, that the day was rendered doubly memorable, in that also it was the Lord's day, on which I commenced this epoch of my renewed lease of life. Sweet day of Christ, the sabbath! And blessed they, who know him as the very sabbath of sabbaths! For this is not the rest of another day, it is now. Hence the precious testimony given by the Holy Ghost; "for we which have believed *do* enter into rest," Heb. iv. 3.[a]

'It was under the gracious impressions received from the Lord, that the Lord was pleased to usher in the first morning of my *seventy-first year.* I pause at the entrance upon it. Perhaps it might be gratifying to some of my readers were I to give in before them a statement of what is called *experiences.* I know, that in historics of this kind, it forms

[a] Vol. III. page 138.

a prominent part. But had I the power of recollection, and could marshal to my remembrance all that has passed and repassed, through the long period of my eventful life, much I fear that the recital would disappoint, rather than satisfy. My experience of the work of grace upon my soul hath totally differed from what, for the most part, is made the standard of religion among the great mass of professors in the present day. All that I know, in relation to myself, are discoveries of my fallen nature, which have been daily unfolding themselves, under divine teaching, more and more to my apprehension. From the first dawn of the day-spring which from on high visited me, when the Lord was pleased to bring me into acquaintance with myself, and to make me know *the plague of my own heart*, I have been unlearning (if the term be warrantable) what I had before been studying with so much care, how to recommend myself by human merit to divine favour. But when the Lord in mercy took me under his pupilage, he inverted this order of teaching. I was then led to see more of *his* ways, and to think less of my *own*. And from that hour of matriculation in his school to the present, I have been learning to get daily out of love with myself, and in love with Christ. And so it hath proved, that in the exact ratio in which I have advanced in the knowledge and love of the Lord, and in the ways of grace, I have been going back in my estimation of all creature excellency and creature attainments, until at length I have arrived at the same conclusion with Job, " to abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xiii. 6.'[a]

' True indeed, (and in the moment of recollection I desire to bless the Lord for his distinguishing mercy over me,) I have been kept by his restraining grace from the more outward acts of sin, into which some (and great professors of inherent holiness in the creature) have fallen. And from the Lord's mercy, I have not been made (as the scripture expresses it) " the reproach of the foolish." Yet notwith-

[a] Vol. III. page 139.

standing these things, I am now too well acquainted, from long experience, with the workings of my inbred and indwelling corruptions, not to know, and as thankfully to acknowledge, that such preservations are wholly the result of God's grace, and not the effect of my merit.'[a] 'And as all the manifestations of the Father to the church are in the person of Christ, so all that the church can know of the Father is in and by Christ.' 'For my own part, when I first came to Christ, or rather, more properly speaking, was first led to Christ for salvation, I did not know my Almighty Leader. But when those words of Christ, of "shewing his people plainly of the Father," were opened to my spiritual understanding, then I learnt to discover the gracious manifestation of Christ to me concerning the Father. Oh! what a ray of light, since that blessed commencement of divine teaching, hath broken in upon my soul! Am I *come* to Christ? Jesus said, "I could not, except given to him of the Father!" John vi. 37. And *drawn* to Christ? This neither could have been done, but by the Father! John vi. 44. Am I beholding the glorious person of my most glorious Christ, as the great *object* of faith? This never could I have done, had I not "heard and learned of the Father!" John vi. 45. Here then I find the same blessed truth confirmed at every step.'[b] 'It is in the Son I learn to know the Father, and all the revelations of the Father are made in the Son.' 'And very sure I am, that if I had but grace to watch the tendencies of the Comforter, in the love of the Spirit, (Rom. xv. 30.) towards my spirit, as the Lord is watching me, I should have a thousand enjoyments which my poor inattentive heart is continually losing through negligence, in which the Lord waits to be gracious; and to direct my heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ, 2 Thess. iii. 15. Isa. xxx. 18.'

'They who have made long and wearisome marches in the

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[a] Vol. III. page 141. [b] Vol. III. page 147.

spiritual warfare can best tell what kind of feeling in the soul that is, which groans under the consciousness of inherent sin, and the infinite preciousness of that sovereign relief which is found only in Christ. Like disbanded soldiers coming out of the battle, which have stood out many a campaign, are best calculated to relate what passed there; so the veteran in the army of our most glorious Lord, when retreating into winter quarters, and viewing and reviewing the many perils the Lord hath carried him through, he it is that will make the truest estimate of the Lord's faithfulness. It is not until the redeemed and regenerated child of God hath been brought into a true spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the person of our most glorious Christ, that he can have a true spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the completeness of his salvation.'[a]

In the above quotations are given some of Zion's Pilgrim's personal experiences of the great and glorious truths of the gospel; but for a more full statement of his confidence, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost, a reference must be made to the work itself. In the sweet assurance of his interest in Christ, and of all the glorious results which arise from an union with him, his prospects were exhilirating, his comforts abounding, and his joys ofttimes overflowing.

With a view to disperse more widely such tracts, and such only, as clearly set forth the gospel plan of salvation, this year was instituted, at his suggestion, 'The Gospel Tract Society.' At a meeting holden in London, on the 16th of June, 1823, Henry Peto, Esq. in the chair, it was resolved unanimously, 'That the present era peculiarly calls for the formation of a society, which shall have for its object the printing and circulating tracts of a pure gospel complexion — that the plan suggested by the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D. is approved by this meeting — that a Committee be now appointed, composed of persons in whom, as far as can be

[a] Vol. III. page 154.

ascertained, the saving work of grace is wrought, to carry the above into effect.' Such was the high estimation in which these gentlemen held his writings and character, and such the implicit confidence which they placed in his judgment and decision, that they not only requested him to accept the presidency, but to become the final editor of all tracts published by the society. Much success attended their exertions, and many auxiliary societies were formed; and although they did not commence the publication of tracts until the October ensuing its establishment, yet before the month of June, 1825, they were enabled to issue no less than *three hundred and sixty thousand!*

Among the various means which are used, in humble dependance on the divine blessing, to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ, this society adopted for publication such gospel tracts 'as set forth the everlasting love of a triune Jehovah—man's totally lost and ruined condition as a sinner—and exhibit the glories of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour—the absolute necessity of regeneration by God the Holy Ghost—justification by faith alone in the blood and righteousness of the God-man Mediator—and the certainty of the final perseverance of the whole election of grace, agreeably to the scriptures of truth, Phil. i. 6.'[a] To this society our venerable friend contributed as many as twelve tracts, which though varied in the choice of their subjects, and in the richness of their language, yet all hold forth the same unvaried and invariable truth. Let it not be understood, that I mean to espouse or justify every expression which may have fallen from his prolific pen, but with the worthy rector of Chillendon, I may here say,—'I have found in Dr. Hawker's works positions to which I cannot agree; but *they involve no point of doctrine essential to salvation.*'[b] The above doctrines are the prominent doctrines of all his works.

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[a] See First Report.

[b] See his Sermon occasioned by the death of Dr. H. page 33.

In some of the titles of the tracts, there is a singular originality, striking, comprehensive, and intelligible to the humblest capacity, where grace reigns. One of them, which has more than once been made the subject of animadversion by men of the free-will caste, is entitled, ' *God's Will* and *Man's Shall*, an everlasting security to the church of Christ, who are called according to God's purpose; to which is added, observations on that interesting passage, Heb. vi. 4—6: proving, from that very scripture, the impossibility of any of God's chosen and called ones falling finally from grace.' In this tract he admirably maintains the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, grounded on the promise and pledge of a covenant God. Of the passage taken from Jer. xxxii. 37—40. which is a crucible of rich elixir to the spiritual alchymist, an omer of rich manna fresh every day to the hungry Israelite; in the application of it to his subject he thus writes:—' It is all made up of God's wills and man's shalls. " I *will* gather them." " I *will* bring them again." " I *will* cause them to dwell safely." " They *shall* be my people." " *I* will be their God." " *I* will give them one heart and one way." " *I* will make an everlasting covenant with them." All, all is God's will, God's work, God's act. The church is merely a receiver, and no worker (in all this). The Lord undertakes for both. God saith, " I will not;" and the same God saith, " they shall not." And what can be needed more?'

' Some there are, who from being great advocates for the *free-will* of the creature, profess to be greatly alarmed at this doctrine of free grace, and in the lightness of their mind, have ventured to suppose, that the belief of it is like opening the flood-gates of sin. Alas! such men so speak because they know not the scriptures, neither the power of God; but are ignorant of what they say and whereof they affirm.'[a] ' What,' continues he, in a subsequent page, ' can as effectually secure the honour of God's laws as the grace of

[a] Vol. X. page 74.

God in the hearts of his people? Who is most likely to be examples of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity;—the regenerated child of God, who undertakes nothing but in divine strength, and desires nothing but the divine glory; or the man, who makes his own free-will the standard of his endeavours, and depends more upon an arm of flesh than in the power of God?'[a]

In explaining the important passage quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews, he takes the same view of it, which all commentators have taken who maintain the doctrine of final perseverance, though from the affluence of his mind, his arguments and illustrations receive a richer dress. But to their views on the subject, I beg leave to state my objections; and to submit, with all deference to the masters in Israel, an explanation, which I consider simple and consistent. I know not any writer who has taken the same view, but it is not less sound because unprecedented. My beloved friend, and other commentators, consider it to be a picture of a finished hypocrite, who after having been once enlightened *with head knowledge*, and having *merely tasted* of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and having been made partaker of the Holy Ghost *in outward gifts;* if he shall fall away, it is impossible to renew him again unto repentance.

My objection to this view is, that the words, *to renew them again*, imply that the persons supposed to have fallen away were once renewed, or the word *again* loses its effect. I cannot admit, that a finished hypocrite was ever renewed; but the words imply some previous renewal. There are few, who would not consider such a finished hypocrite, the chief of sinners. The gospel of Christ holds forth a hope for the chief of sinners, but this view leaves no hope for the finished hypocrite, who has fallen away from a mere profession! It is generally assumed, that such an one never was renewed;

[a] Vol. X. page 78.

and yet in the conclusion, it is inferred that it is impossible to renew him *again*, or indeed to renew him at all. That is, that God's grace cannot reach, or cannot renew a finished hypocrite! Could it be proved that he had committed the unpardonable sin, there would then be no hope; but this is not proved. Nor can I conceive, how such a character can be said to "crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put him to an open shame," more than David by his dreadful fall, who thereby "gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," 2 Sam. xii. 14. I am not arguing to countenance hypocrisy, *God forbid*; but to elicit truth!

As many of the Lord's renewed and tried ones, whose faith is sometimes shaken from a mistaken view of this passage of scripture as to their final perseverance, may be induced to read these pages, because of the celebrity of the author whose Memoirs I write, who might not be inclined to peruse a tract of mine on the subject, I therefore feel disposed, for the edification of such, to give them as briefly as possible my humble comment thereon; in the hope that it will be blessed of the Lord to that purpose. And I trust that it will not be considered irrelevant or obtrusive, when it is recollected, that my proposal was not only to furnish such memorials of his life as I could obtain, but to give an account of his writings, in which my own remarks were of course anticipated; and the more readily I submit my opinion, because by no means dissonant to the doctrines he generally maintained.

It appears to me, [a] that the apostle is, in this passage, shewing the impossibility of any man experiencing more

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[a] Without giving a new translation to the words, the grammatical construction of the original runs thus: "For it is impossible to renew again unto repentance those once enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and having tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and having fallen away—crucifying (thus) for themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame." Although the word *if* be not in the original, it is certainly implied.

than one new-birth; that if a man be born of God, and experience all that is here stated, on the supposition that he become again degenerate, it is impossible for him to undergo a second new-birth. If he fall away, it is impossible *to renew him again!* Here lies the emphasis. And there is much beauty in the oneness and perpetuity of regeneration. Although the apostle lays down a supposition, yet it is but a supposition, to prove more strongly the contrary of it; for he tells the true disciples of Christ, the heirs of promise, that "he was persuaded better things of them, and things that accompany salvation, though he thus spake." He also immediately refers "to the immutability of God's counsel, confirmed by an oath, that by two immutable things, (his counsel and oath) in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." It is in unison with my dear departed friend's doctrines, that no man ever did, and that no man ever can, experience more than one new birth. It is a passing from death unto life, and this by virtue of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But, if a man, once *quickened* by the Spirit of God unto newness of life, become again *dead* in trespasses and sins, there would be a necessity of crucifying the Son of God afresh, that by virtue of this second crucifixion he might again live through him. There are who assert, that a man may fall away and be renewed again repeatedly, and thus experience, for ought they maintain to the contrary, as many new births in one year as there are new moons, and die in his sins at last. But we have not so learned Christ; but believe, and are "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!" Phil. i. 6.'

No man, perhaps, had larger conceptions of the greatness and glory of the change which is wrought in the heart by regeneration, than this venerable man of God. This is so admirably and elegantly expressed in one of the tracts,

entitled, '*My Birth-day*,' adopted by the 'Gospel Tract Society,' that I will take the liberty to close my observation upon it by a brief quotation, in the hope that it will further its circulation, as a suitable memento to be sent to any friend on his birth-day. 'There are two highly interesting views,' saith he, 'in which the recollection of my birth-day affected my mind; namely, of the birth-day in nature, and of the new birth in grace. I stay not so much to enquire, how many years in the world's almanack I count, since the first cry from the womb at my birth indicated that one more of Adam's fallen helpless race was born; as to ask my own heart, how many days I can number since the call of God "from darkness to light," and "from the power of sin and Satan" into Christ's kingdom? We do not calculate God's love by our calendar of time, because that love itself is everlasting. Here, then, is neither beginning nor ending. "The child (new-born) shall die an hundred years old," Isa. lxv. 20. But it is the vastness of the change from whence we are to form the *data*. The stride from nature to grace, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, is greater than all the after-steps by which the Lord leads on his people. If the Lord was pleased to make the new-born child in Christ, immediately after that birth, as high as the highest angel in light, the transition would not be as great, as when first calling the sinner from death to life, and from sin to salvation in Christ! And in that call is folded up, in one rich cluster, eternal glory with all its preliminaries. Here are, therefore, no calculations of time. The love of God in Christ hath no arithmetic such as we use. God loves not by the day. His is an everlasting love; an ocean for ever flowing, and which hath neither bottom nor shore!"[a]

Soon after the establishment of the 'Gospel Tract Society,' he commenced the 'Village Sermon Society,' by way of appendix to the former; yet, I believe, the funds were not blended;

[a] Vol. X. page 118.

but the latter was chiefly supported by himself, together with a few friends. Four-and-twenty of the first sermons, which are all yet published, are the production of his own pen. A quotation from the preface of the first sermon will shew the object he had in view in publishing them; and where, and when, and how he would recommend them to be read. 'Let it be supposed,' saith he, 'that two or three of a village, or two or three of a family, among the cottagers, remote from the great congregation, were occasionally to meet together, as opportunity offered, when the labours of the day were over, and more especially on the Lord's day, that sweet day of rest; and after, by prayer and supplication, seeking a blessing on their little assembly, were to read a portion of the word of God, and then one of the Village Sermons; might we not hope, that as it was said of Christ upon a memorable occasion of old, so it would be said now; "The power of the Lord was present to heal them," Luke v. 17.' To which he subjoins this brief petition for a divine blessing: 'Lord Jesus! condescend by those feeble means to make known the almightiness of thy strength! As far as those Village Sermons are in conformity to thy holy word, and the sovereign purposes of thy holy will, own them in the hearts and consciences of thy people. Let that sacred scripture be felt and made known thereby, in which it is said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," Zech. iv. 6.'[a]

Two or three of these sermons may not appear so fully adapted for general village reading as others, since they refer to particular events in the memoranda of his own life; as for instance, the sermon preached after the decease of his youngest daughter—also after an absence of a few weeks, in visiting other churches—after a confinement by sickness of three months—after an absence of four months, except a short taking leave at Easter—yet much that is of a peculiar

[a] Vol. IV. page 4.

application to his own church or circumstances is confined to the preface; and even these little incidents, which may be considered personal, give, in the estimation of many readers, an additional interest to the discourse. In his usual discourses from the pulpit, he would not unfrequently address the congregation for several minutes together before he delivered his text, which was done to prepare the mind and keep the attention awake, that he might introduce his text with larger emphasis and better effect, if so be the Lord might be pleased so to bless it. The third of his Village Sermons, as well as several others, has an introduction of this description, which will illustrate and confirm my remarks. More than one hundred thousand of these sermons have been printed and widely circulated; but they will not be received with any lively zest, except by those who wish to have the Lord Jesus held forth as the alpha and omega, the first and the last, the O yes! and amen, of every discourse.

As a proof that he would have no one, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, rest satisfied with present attainments, hear his testimony:—'True indeed, when first the Lord is beginning the work of grace upon any of his chosen ones, the awakenings, by the Lord the Spirit, to a deep and alarming apprehension of sin, become so distressing to the guilty conscience, that a deliverance from the wrath to come is the sole consideration that occupies the heart. But, in the after stages of the life of God in the soul, when having found peace in the blood of the cross, the child of God is brought into fuller views of salvation; it is a sad matter, and which cannot but of necessity induce great leanness in spirit, that any of the Lord's people should sit down satisfied with those attainments, when the Lord opens larger discoveries of the church's interest in Christ.'[a] So also in another place: 'When by regeneration we are brought into a capability of having our spiritual senses called forth, in the study of the

[a] Vol. IV. page 194.

person and incommunicable salvation of Christ, we are supposed to be daily advancing in an holy familiarity with both, and find all our delight in this one divine science only."[a] O yes; there will be in every child of God a growing acquaintedness with things divine; and, if there be not a daily advancing in hallowed intimacy with the Lord Jesus, there will be a desire after it. Our venerable friend, though he considered sanctification like the consecration of a vessel for the sanctuary, to be but one act of the Holy Ghost in setting us apart for God, when translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and consequently, no more progressive than consecration or regeneration itself; yet he considers it a sad matter, when in the after stages of the life of God in the soul, there is a resting in present attainments; and reminds the believer of his supposed advances in holy familiarity with the Lord Jesus, both as to his person and incommunicable salvation. By way of parenthesis I would here observe, that by *incommunicable* salvation is to be understood, that in which no one ever did or can participate as co-partner—"Of the people there was none with him, his own arm brought salvation," Isa lxiii. 3, 5. I have called the attention of the reader to those points of doctrine, because it has been falsely supposed, that in denying sanctification to be progressive, he denied all progressive advances in the divine life.

In this year, 1823, he also published, 'An Appeal to the common feelings of mankind, in behalf of the Negroes in the West India Islands; more especially addressed to the subjects of the British Empire, through the medium of a letter to William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.; in which is taken a short retrospect of the history of those much injured beings in that part which hath long called forth the public attention; together with some of the most popular arguments, which from time to time have been advanced in favour of

[a] Vol. IV. page 327.

emancipation by statesmen of the highest authority; but which, after a lapse of more than *thirty* years, hath left the subject where it found it, and the negro as complete a slave under all the rigour of cruelty and oppression in 1823, as in any former period of his sad history. To which is added, a short but simple plan, and as practicable as it is simple, for giving relief by gradual and sure means to this sorrowful class of society, in the purchase of plantations, with all their appendages of negroes and cattle, through the voluntary contributions of the whole realm. A measure, if once adopted and followed up as subscriptions shall enable, in the purchase of one plantation after another, which will tend to raise from their present degradation those too long oppressed beings of our common nature, and restore them to that station in the community to which they are justly entitled by all laws human and divine.'

The above paragraph is embodied in the title-page. He had endeavoured to excite the attention of the public, as well from the *press* as the *pulpit*, to the same laudable cause previously to this publication, by an advertisement in 'The Times,' of the 3rd of June preceding; and in a sermon preached at St. Clement's Church, in the Strand, June 11, following, he informs us,* that he 'had the high pleasure to hear, that resolutions were made, when the service was over, by certain persons present of opulence of engaging in annual subscriptions for ten years in succession to a considerable amount, whenever the society might be formed.' The name by which it was to be designated is, 'The Society for purchasing the Emancipation of Slaves in the West India Islands by voluntary contribution.' His plan was to purchase plantations, and to place the negroes on the estate in classes of servants, and not slaves; not by giving them their freedom at once, but holding it forth to them, after a certain period of time, as a remuneration of their labour.

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* Vol. X. page 487.

We learn from this pamphlet, that considerably more than thirty years previously to its publication, when the feeling part of the community in this land took alarm at the horrid traffic in human blood of those poor Africans; and contemplating it nationally as a sin of no small magnitude, committees were formed in different parts of the kingdom for the purpose of procuring their manumission—that himself had the honour (' if,' saith he, ' it can be deemed an honour to have been engaged in what proved to be visionary,') to be one of a committee at that time formed at Plymouth, to promote this good work. At the request of several members of the society, he preached a sermon at the parish church of Charles in favour of the abolition, and which at the same request was afterwards published. Though thirty long years had passed, and little or nothing had been effected towards their total emancipation, yet we find him with a zeal as warm as ever advocating the cause of the poor negroes, and proposing an equitable if not altogether a feasible plan to release them from their yoke. As in his ' Appeal to the people of England on the subject of the French Revolution,' he shewed himself a true *patriot;* so in his ' Appeal to the common feelings of mankind in behalf of the enslaved Africans,' he has shewn himself a genuine *philanthropist!*

A barrister, of eminency in his profession, engaged *gratuitously* to frame a digest of laws proper for the regulation of the society which he wished to be formed; and a person of approved merit, who had resided fifteen years in Jamaica, tendered his services to superintend and manage their concerns, ' without an eye to personal profit:' but the plan which he suggested did not succeed. Difficulties of a commercial nature presented themselves; for were a society of this description to employ their contributions in purchasing and cultivating plantations, it would become a trading company; and in case of subsequent losses, which might arise from things unforeseen, every director, and perhaps every

contributor, whose sanction ensured credit, might be considered responsible for those losses, even if he never shared in the gains. I know no other reason why his proposal met not with success. Yet who can but applaud the effort which he made to engage the opulent of the realm, by whom such losses would not have been felt, to embark in this cause. The conclusion of this Appeal is ardent and animating, stimulating every rank to unite in their endeavours " to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke." ' In a word, the ice once broken, and the long and hitherto impenetrable frost now thawed, (for so it then seemed to be) this vessel of mercy, will,' saith he, ' launch forth for the West India Islands, with her golden cargo, where slavery hath too long reigned with despotic sway over the negro ; but where now will be unfurled the streamer of freedom and humanity, and guided at the helm by the Lord of Hosts, her charter will be the greatest and most valuable ever delivered on landing, " in bringing liberty to the captive, in binding up the broken in heart, opening the prison doors to them that are bound, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord."[a]'

Among the publications of this year's catalogue, appeared a work, entitled, ' Strictures on the Plymouth Antinomians, by Joseph Cottle,' the author of several poetical works. Of their merits I am not prepared to give an opinion ; for I never read them, except a ' Metrical Version of the Psalms,' in which I have met with many stanzas elegantly expressed, and admirably adapted to convey the sense of the original ; and on the whole, it is much better executed than many of the metrical versions of his predecessors, of which I have seen nearly *thirty*. But in these his ' Strictures,' I am grieved to notice so much disingenuity and want of integrity ; so much illiberality of sentiment and ignorance of doctrine ; such a levity of spirit and adroitness of insinuation ; and I may say,

[a] Vol. X. page 506.

disregard to common verity ; that it would fill a folio volume to make animadversions on all that might be made the subject of discussion, and in my humble opinion of just reprehension. He has so matted truth and error together, and formed them into figures of his own fancy, that it would take more space to unravel the threads, and expose the deception of even a few of them, than can well be allowed in a work of this nature. From the picture he has given of the Plymouth Antinomians, the reader is almost led to conclude, that these Antinomians are sinners above other Antinomians, and that the caricature which he has copied and embellished from Mr. Bidlake, is no unfair likeness of Dr. Hawker. It would have been well, if the mellowed relenting, which at the close of his work he tells us he felt, in discharging so painful and ungracious a duty in publishing these 'Strictures,' had induced him to have committed them to the flames. The Lord pardon him for the mischief he has done!

Dr. Hawker was a witness for God and his truth in this awful day of ours, when the sovereignty of God in the election of grace is not only called in question, but made a subject of derision and scorn. Mr. Cottle is evidently of the free-will school, if not a Pelagian. It may be noted, that all advocates or barristers, at this world's tribunal, when they wish to depreciate evidence, will attempt if possible to traduce the witness, that they may more easily invalidate his testimony. It is in this light I view Mr. Cottle and his attack. He dislikes the doctrines of the late Rev. Dr. Hawker. To make him ridiculous, if possible, he mixes up his character with all the ribaldry of anecdote with which his common-place book will furnish him concerning weak and ignorant religionists ; and to make his doctrine odious, he takes certain scraps of sentences, and gives them a colouring which the Doctor never intended, and which in fairness ought not to be given ; and then brings forth the whole as an exhibition of another Sampson blinded and buffeted to make sport for the Philistines !

His work bears not the character of a sober appeal to scripture; and although he tells us he has long noticed in Dr. H. a *partial*, and latterly a *complete* abandonment of *some* of the most important doctrines of the Reformation, he has not had the fairness to state particularly what doctrines of the Reformation he had completely abandoned. And as to a *partial* abandonment of *some* of them, which he has long noticed, I confess that it requires some knowledge of compound vulgar fractions to guess what he means. A *partial* abandonment of some, must be *some* of *some!* But I am pained to be thus frivolous, and only condescend to it to shew how pompous sometimes men may make their own absurdities, by using great swelling words of vanity; alas! how true, "they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Of Mr. Cottle, and of other opponents of the late learned, venerable, and godly pastor of the parish of Charles, we may say what St. Luke says of the Jews in reference to their accusation of St. Paul before Festus, "they laid many and grievous complaints against him which they could not prove," Acts xxv. 7.

Mr. Cottle has an undoubted right to make animadversions upon what he considers heresy; but let it be proved to be so from scripture, and let him speak the words of truth and soberness. If there be an abscess in the spiritual body, let it be opened with the keen lancet of God's own word, and not with the jagged instrument of his own wit and sarcasm, which will only lacerate and inflame what it was intended to open and heal. Notwithstanding Mr. C.'s advocacy for man's natural and moral capacity of doing good, the work does not appear to me to have been written under a temperate, holy, and chastened spirit, which, although the natural warmth of temper will sometimes effervesce, was so discoverable in Dr. Hawker's controversial or polemical writings. I appeal to the general testimony of his reviewers.

As a proof of Mr. Cottle's disingenuousness and want of integrity, he first blackens the character of Antinomians as

much as possible, as 'confederating with direct Infidels in assaulting all the old and accredited land-marks of religion and virtue;' and then denominates Dr. H. the great patron and apostle of their creed! But where in all his works has he shewn a confederacy with direct Infidels for this or for any purpose? Has it not been rather thrust on him as a reproach, that he objected to the Bible Society for admitting Socinian Infidels to the council-board of their committees? The object of the Bible Society is highly laudable, and I bless God I live in such an era as this, when such efforts are making to translate the word of God into all tongues; but no society may do more mischief than this, if care and vigilance be not with them who guide the helm. But this is not all. Mr. Cottle gives his own definition of an Antinomian with the foulest features of spiritual deformity; and then unblushingly tells the world, that Dr. Hawker is an Antinomian: and afterwards disingenuously adds, 'in order to settle the question, Dr. H. shall speak for himself;' and from his quotations insinuates, that Dr. H. acknowledges himself an Antinomian, and encourages others not to shrink from the charge; whereas, Dr. H. had given his own definition of an Antinomian, which was of a scriptural complexion, and as far remote from Mr. Cottle's definition as the east is from the west.

'It is indubitable,' says Mr. Cottle, 'that the conclusion to be drawn from Antinomian preaching is, that man has neither a natural nor moral ability to comply with the commands of God, and that he cannot be made even a medium by which spiritual benefit may be conveyed to a fellow-creature; those who are the most enlightened from above, it appears are compelled to lie like logs on the ocean, operated upon by influences over which they have no controul.' 'This,' continues he, 'is the blackest *fatalism* that tongue can utter, and is opposed from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelations—the incapacity of doing any good, so earnestly contended for, involves terrific consequences!' But is not

this incapacity of doing good, the very doctrine inculcated in the *tenth* article of the Church of England, which I need not here prove is well grounded on the word of God? Hear its language; 'The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have *no power, (natural nor moral)*[a] to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and *working* with us when we have that good will.' It was to me unknown, that any sect maintained that man cannot be made even a *medium* of spiritual good to his fellow-creatures; for were not all the prophets and apostles made mediums of this description? May we not apprehend, that this was a flight of Mr. Cottle's own imagination? He quotes no authority for it. But as to man's natural and moral incapacity to comply with the commands of God; or in other words, to do good works unless operated upon by influences over which he has no controul, this is a doctrine of the Reformation, which Mr. Cottle not only abandons, if he ever held it, but designates the blackest fatalism! So ignorant does he appear to be of what are the doctrines of the Reformation, that he charges Dr. H. with completely abandoning at least some of them, which charge has no foundation in truth, whilst he himself is in reality doing the very thing with which he charges the Doctor. With all Mr. Cottle's apparent zeal for the integrity of the Church of England, and especially of her ministers, he denominates the doctrine involved in her tenth article the blackest fatalism that ever tongue can utter! Surely Mr. Cottle is no churchman—whether this be the case or not, his creed is not scriptural.

If we were to judge of Mr. Cottle from his own language somewhat after the manner in which he has judged our worthy

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[a] By referring to the article the reader will find, that the words within the parenthesis are introduced here merely by way of explanation.

friend, we might, and with much more propriety, charge him with holding this very doctrine of fatalism. He has asserted, that the *assemblage* who sat under Dr. Hawker's ministry were *ill-fated*. If it were from the illness of their fate that they were so circumstanced, it was not from the badness of their choice; and therefore, whatever accrued must be attributed to their ill-fate, and not to their bad choice. But if fate be admitted so to circumstance the people, the same fate must be admitted to circumstance the minister; and thus, by induction, fate must be admitted to govern all the world! Surely this is deducible from Mr. Cottle's language. I wish not to take an undue advantage of Mr. Cottle's inadvertency, but to shew how, at random, he will use words derogatory to his own creed. He is by no means a prudent or cautious writer. But, if there is so little discrimination in him in the choice of his own words, how is he competent to sit in judgment on the words of others!

Dr. H. stated in one of his pamphlets, 'that the preachers of the Gospel find no authority to make offers or invitations, in an *indiscriminate* manner to sinners in general.' For it may be noted, that to scripture *invitations* is annexed the character to whom they are made, with a special and particular discrimination: as for instance, "Ho, every one that *thirsteth*, come ye to the waters," Isa. lv. 1. "Come unto me, all ye that *labour* and are *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. "And whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. In these, as in other invitations, the character is particularized. Mark the distinctions. The first is to every one that *thirsteth* for the waters of life; the second, to all that *labour* and are heavy laden, whatever their burden might be; the last to him that is *willing*, whosoever he is, whom the Lord has made *willing* in the day of his power. These invitations are not made in an *indiscriminate* manner to sinners in *general*, but to sinners of this special description of character. Mr. Cottle inveighs mightily against Dr. H. for making this statement, as

if he made special what the Lord had spoken to sinners in general; and indeed for saying what himself has said or sung in his version of the Psalms:

> "But ye who slight God's holy word,
> And still your evil ways pursue;
> The promises of God the Lord
> Were never made to comfort you."—*Ps. I. Cottle's Version.*

No; but to comfort the Lord's people—his saints, who are to be gathered together unto him—"those that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice," even the sacrifice of the cross," Ps. l. 5.

Mr. Cottle has asserted, that 'Dr. Hawker forbids all invitations to sinners.' This is not true. In what page of all his works has Dr. Hawker forbidden invitations to sinners? He simply states, that 'we find no authority in scripture to make them *indiscriminately* to sinners.' If Mr. Cottle cannot see a grand distinction between these two propositions, he is incapacitated to argue the point. If he did see a distinction when he wrote that sentence, he is chargeable with not maintaining the purity and integrity of truth. This demands serious consideration. The words of a minister of Christ are not thus to be perverted with impunity. Whether this were done by incapacity, inadvertency, or design, will ere long be heard at the supreme tribunal! If Mr. Cottle can put such a misconstruction on his written sentences, which he had time and leisure to weigh and consider, is he likely in all points to give an accurate testimony of what he heard *vivâ voce*, when the mind is called into a more rapid exercise; and while it is pondering over one sentence that arrested the attention, the connexion which followed is sometimes lost? It is not my wish to throw out any improper suggestion, but so it struck me as I was perusing this part of his book.

Both Mr. Cottle and his reviewer or reviewers in the Christian Observer, have produced a *few* texts, which they consider not reducible to Dr. Hawker's general rules. Mr.

Cottle says, that these are invitations which 'Dr. H. cannot *with his heart* repeat;' which is certainly taking upon him to say, what only He could say who knew his heart. It is my opinion, that he could and did repeat them with all his heart. The reviewer, in an air of triumph, says, that any single text of those quoted is no more to be answered, (that is, as I understand it, to be reduced to Dr. Hawker's general rule,) than "the Word was God," by the Socinians; or, "Drink ye all of it," by the Papist. Of those texts, I will select one as a specimen to shew how rashly some reviewers will decide. This hastiness of judgment ill becomes a Christian Observer. As a text *indiscriminately* addressed to sinners, both Mr. C. and the reviewer refer to Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." But as it now reads, is it not a promise to the returning sinner and to every returning sinner, and only to sinners of this description? Here is the discrimination. Moreover, I maintain that there is not a stronger text in all the Bible to establish the doctrines of Dr. Hawker than the text just quoted, when properly translated. For the inaccuracy of the present translation, and for the correctness of the one here given, I appeal to any Hebrew scholar. It is not an invitation, nor an offer of grace, on any self-accomplished condition. The proper translation runs thus, in connexion with the preceding verse, which is addressed to the Lord's people as the whole chapter evidently shews: "Seek ye the Lord. While he may be found, call upon him. While he is near, the wicked *shall* forsake[a] his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and *shall* return[b] unto the Lord and he *will* have mercy upon him, and to our God for he *will* abundantly pardon." Here is God's *will* and man's *shall*. In the original, these words are not in the imperative mood, but in the future tense of the

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[a] Relinquet, יעזב [b] Revertetur, ישב

indicative; and the Septuagint version will sanction me in altering the division in the words of the text. I have made as little variation in the language as possible, although the translation is capable of additional improvement. The other texts, as far as they can be considered invitations, are as easily reduced to his general rule, *that the invitations of God to sinners are not made in an* indiscrimate *manner!*

Mr. Cottle has stated, that Dr. Hawker maintained the doctrine of *imputed sanctification*. From what I know of his doctrines and writings, I do not believe that he ever adopted the term. I should as readily believe, that he had adopted the term, *imputed regeneration*. Until I am shewn the page in his works where the words are used as his own, I shall maintain, that he never adopted the phrase. He has expressed his disapprobation of the term *progressive* sanctification, and states that sanctification is *one act*[a] of the Holy Ghost, by which we are quickened from a death of sin unto newness of life—how then could he have used the term as if it were an *imputative* act? Himself and his doctrines have been grossly vilified. The general opinion is, that after we are regenerated by the Holy Ghost, we are, by advances in the divine life, progressively sanctified. Dr. Hawker maintains, that we are sanctified in the very act of regeneration, and are made thenceforth an habitation of God through the Spirit; and all the subsequent progressive advances in the divine life, are the fruits, the effects, and sweet testimonies of our sanctification. I do not see how the moral government of the world simply considered is at stake by either statement; although Mr. Cottle has taken alarm, and is gone forth into the street to cry, Fire! I see no more danger from the one view than from the other, except to Mr. Cottle's free-will system.

The Rev. T. Reed, Minister of Rehoboth Chapel, Fetter Lane, London, in his Letter to Mr. Cottle, on his 'Strictures,'

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[a] See his Comment on 2 Thess. ii. 13.

has undertaken to justify the term *imputed sanctification*, by shewing, that the eternal Jehovah called his people holy, when their conduct was most unholy; and that they could not be deemed holy but by imputed sanctity; and in this point of view he maintains, that imputed sanctification is a scriptural doctrine, and not as Mr. Cottle has called it, a doctrine of devils! The Rev. J. Babb, late curate to Dr. Hawker, does not appear to shrink from the charge in this view, that "Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. But neither of these gentlemen consider, that the imputation of holiness to God's people, when unholy in themselves, supersedes the work of the Spirit on the heart, or the fruits of the Spirit in the life. In giving an epitome of Dr. Hawker's writings and preaching, to meet Mr. Cottle's base insinuations, Mr. Reed observes, that Dr. H. first sets before the view of the enlightened sinner, the glorious person of Christ as the author of our salvation; and then proves that a bewailing and forsaking of sin will follow the reception of his atonement and righteousness; and this, instead of preventing aspirations after holiness, will lead the receiver of pardon and reconciliation to ask for grace to mortify sin, and for power from on high, that he may "adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things;" as a recipient of the grace of God that bringeth salvation, he will "deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," Titus ii. 11, 12.'[a] Mr. Babb, also, so far from advocating a barren faith, shews that 'one man may abound more than another, "in the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God," and also in the fruits of holiness "in all holy conversation and godliness;" yet even this,' continues he, 'could not be, if we were all *filled* with these fruits, as we ought to be.'[b]

I cannot here forbear quoting an honest appeal of the Rev.

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[a] Letter to Mr. Cottle, page 23.

[b] Reviewer reviewed, page 22.

Mr. Reed to Mr. Cottle—'You say, that Dr. Hawker's *sentiments tend to subvert the very basis of civil order!* Sir, you know as well as I can tell you, this is false. Dr. H.'s sentiments do no such thing! I am really grieved, that you are so often making such untrue and unjust declarations. Had Dr. Hawker been a traitor to the sovereign of the realm, you could not have spoken more reproachfully of him than you have. I demand of you, sir, to shew me the place, the community, the family, where such effects have been produced, as the subversion of the basis of civil order by Dr. H.'s doctrines? Until you do this, you will not be held guiltless of uttering a most cruel slander against a peaceful and exemplary servant of Jesus Christ, and a faithful minister of the Church of England!'

In a paragraph quoted by the Christian Observer, Mr. Cottle insinuates, that Dr. Hawker had renounced *the scriptures of truth* as a *standard of faith*, and a *rule of life!* But no man was more tenacious than Dr. H. of maintaining, that the scriptures of truth and those only were the true standard of faith and the unerring rule of life. Does not Mr. Cottle blunder here on a doctrine which is held by some able and learned divines, though I do not know that Dr. H. has specifically dwelt upon it, that the *law*, that is the decalogue of Moses, is not the christian's rule of life? This doctrine does not extend generally to the Holy Scriptures, but simply to the law of ten commands; and it is not to be understood, that this doctrine is so maintained by them, as if the christian were freed from the obligations of the law; but that the gospel opens to the christian new duties which the ten commands do not enjoin, as "repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." The rigour of the law admits of no repentance, and the letter of the law inculcates nothing of that life of faith which the christian lives upon the Son of God. It knows nothing of Jesus as a way of access unto the Father through the Spirit, or as the Mediator of a new covenant. It knows nothing of

counting all things but dung or dross, that we may win Christ and be found in Him; with other such like rules of true christian living.

Mr. Cottle appears zealous for holiness; but in his statements he certainly does not honour, as he ought to honour, the third person of the glorious Trinity, 'who sanctifieth us and all the elect people of God.' I have generally observed, that men who are most zealous to promote or exalt creature-holiness, give little or no distinction in their writings to God the Holy Ghost. This was not the case with our late venerable friend. After insinuating that Dr. Hawker, and such men as Dr. Hawker, never pray for the spread of the gospel, he intimates 'how impossible it is for a christian to feel placid under the conviction, that *no particle of his gold* is circulating *in grand combination* through the *veins* of *truth*, who is now rising like a refreshed giant from his slumbers, to achieve new and more memorable triumphs on the plains of the spiritual Armageddon.' All this is flourish. Such similes have no warrantry in God's word. By adopting such personifications, the Holy Ghost is robbed of his glory. I am far from discouraging christian missions; but be it ever remembered, that missionaries may be sent, and the truth of the gospel be preached, and not a single soul be converted, unless God the Spirit open the heart to receive it. Missionaries may plant their battery against what Mr. Cottle calls the *almost* impregnable fortress of human nature, and find it not only almost but *altogether* impregnable, without the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying their ministry. The apostle reminds the Corinthians, that his preaching was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power;" but when Dr. Hawker tells us, that he is grieved to hear men using *enticing* words of man's wisdom; or in other language, the *wooing* and *winning* words of human persuasion—he is for this held up to ridicule and scorn. Although Mr. Cottle may set a great value on what he calls '*all the elements of intellectual*

strength,' I know not any who have made greater blunders in divinity than men of great talents. Confiding in their own abilities, they forget that it is the Holy Ghost who alone can guide us into all truth. Newton and Locke were great philosophers, but they were very shallow divines. Although Mr. Cottle may imagine it, it is not a matured judgment which ensures a steady and safe course through the shoals of diversified opinions, but the Lord the Spirit, whom in such statements Mr. Cottle not only overlooks, but thereby dishonours!

In reviewing this volume of 'Strictures,' I pass over a large mass of scurrilities, which any one slightly acquainted with the Doctor's real character and writings must know to be untrue and unwarranted; but I cannot pass over the inconsistency of Mr. Cottle in one particular, by which we may see an illustration of that text, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," Prov. xii. 10. Mr. Cottle tells us, that he has such tender mercy for DR. HAWKER, that, although he plumes himself on his prowess in taking this lion by the beard, he would not hurt the hair of his head; but in the next page, for it cannot be misunderstood, he classes him among the degenerate part of Antinomian ministers, who instead of leaving the establishment cleave to their benefices. 'But,' saith he, 'if such men will not *go*, they should be *driven*.' The words in italics are so marked by himself. But note this inconsistency; he would not hurt the hair of his head, but he would eject him from his living! In another part, he tells the world that 'too much forbearance has been exercised towards Antinomians—that they demand a treatment different from that to which others are entitled—and require that the character of the remedy should bear some proportion to the *violence* of the disease.' 'Where,' saith he, in another place, 'is the vigilance of primates and prelates, in allowing such *funguses* to adhere to the venerable walls of the church, within which the brightest ornaments of past ages exerted their mighty talents to expose the very heresies which now in the same places Antinomians unblush-

ingly proclaim?' If this be not exciting persecution, I know not what is. Yes, thou blessed man of God, who art safe in glory, if this man had possessed the power, he would have not only taken thee by thy beard and dragged thee from thy home, but have wept over thee crocodile tears, whilst he inflicted on thee this calamity! But the Lord hath forbidden us to bring a railing accusation against any man; to him, therefore, would I simply say, "The Lord rebuke thee!"

To explain his views more fully on the work of divine grace on the heart, Dr. Hawker published a tract on the subject of Sanctification. In the introduction of which, he says, 'So many and various have been and still are the sentiments of men, yea, and of gracious men too, on this subject, that it is plain their different views cannot all have been learnt in the same school, and under the same divine Teacher. For my part, so angry have been some of my mother's children, (as the spouse in the Canticles calls them, Song i. 6.) with me, for what I have advanced on the subject in my 'Poor Man's Commentary,' that I fear, unless an act of grace from the Lord prompts them to regard me with more tenderness, I shall not soon be forgiven by them. What a relief it is to my soul on all such occasions, (and I feel the blessedness of it in the moment of writing) that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. If Jesus smiles, it matters not who frowns. And what a holy calm follows the strife of tongues, when ceasing from man we are enabled to draw nigh unto the Lord!'[a]

'If,' saith he, in his explanation of it, 'I am to believe, that the work of God the Holy Ghost in quickening and regenerating the church is not a finished work, as are the acts of the other persons of the Godhead; that sanctification is progressive, and depending on man's improvement, the beautiful order in the covenant of grace is hereby broken, and the great event of salvation left to a peradventure, whether it

[a] Vol. X. page 188.

shall or shall not be accomplished!' 'Moreover,' as he observes in a subsequent paragraph, 'if a man's own progressive sanctification (or improvement) is to form a part of the work, the creature is to divide the glory with the infinite Creator.' 'If I know any thing of my own heart,' continues he, 'I have no one object in view when trying the question by the divine standard but the divine glory. If the event were to prove the reverse of what I have learned to accept it, and I have to learn that the grace of God depends upon man for improvement in a progressive sanctification, I bless God I shall stand on even ground with the advocates of this doctrine; and may say, "We believe, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they!" Acts xv. 11.

After taking a view of the working of sin in his heart, which is apparent from his spiritual conflicts by day, and even from the visions of the mind by night, he exclaims, 'Precious Lord Jesus! should I not tremble at the very thought of thine inspection, if my acceptance before thee depended upon the least atom of worth in me? And can I, can any man in the consciousness of such things, be led to advocate the cause of inherent holiness? The question rings through all the chambers of the conscience, and all the walls of the heart reverberate the solemn sound, and echoes to the enquiry—"How shall man be just before God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4.'

'When I look back to the days of old, when I consider the years of many generations, when I read the groans and self-reproaches of the greatest servants of the Most High God; not in the days of their unregeneracy, but many of them years after a saving work of grace had been wrought in their hearts, I ask myself the question, did these men indeed feel what they have said, and under such impressions could any one have made them believe the doctrine of inherent holiness and progressive sanctification?' The reviewers in the 'Christian

Observer,'[a] having quoted the chief part of the above sentence, adds, 'what completes the paragraph we dare not transcribe; and we can only say, that if the day does not come, when its author, like Cranmer, might wish that right hand burnt from the arm which traced the sentiment, it will be no symptom to us of Dr. Hawker's good progress of any kind.'

This is the venerable man of whom in the preceding part of the same review, they give this attestation—'Whose whole life we have strong testimony to believe has been free from what is usually deemed a moral blemish; whose early career was marked with very distinguished services in the cause of sacred truth, and whose latest breath we believe he will desire to employ in healing the troubled spirit, and cheering the broken in heart.' Yet of this quotation from his works just referred to, they say, '*what completes the paragraph we dare not transcribe!*'—and then subjoin language which is as harsh and cruel, as this affected concealment of theirs is disingenuous and unjust! Well might the Rev. Mr. Babb say, in his 'Examination of their Remarks,' which he has given to the public: 'This, sirs, is an illicit silence; yea, it is as *evil* as it is *affected*, and becomes at once the responsible parent of many a false and hurtful idea, conveyed by a dark insinuation.' And to prevent the enquirer from examining for himself, they artfully, yea avowedly conceal the name of the tract. But that the reader of these Memoirs may see and judge for himself, I do not hesitate to transcribe the whole faithfully.

'Nay, hath God the Holy Ghost in the history of those faithful followers of the Lord given a single instance in all the Bible of such a one? Hath the Holy Ghost testified to Noah of such an improvement in his heart, in those different views given of him before and after the flood? Gen. vi. 8—21. Was Lot in a state of progressive sanctification, whose

[a] November, 1823.

"righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," when in Sodom, but who afterwards fell into such an offence at Zoar? Gen. xix. with 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Was Abraham advancing in self-holiness, whose faith was so illustrious at Moriah, and towards the close of life took unto him concubines? Gen. xxii. with xxv. 6. Do the lives of Moses, Aaron, David, Jeremiah, Peter, and Paul, furnish proofs of a progression in sanctity, and not rather on the contrary, most decided testimonies to the reverse? See Num. xx. 10. Exod. xxxii. 21. 2 Sam. vii. compared with chap. xi. Jer. i. with xx. 14, &c. Matt. xvi. 17. with xxvi. 69, &c. Rom. vii. 18, &c. &c.'

And is this the paragraph for which this good man was branded before the world as writing what Christian Observers dared not transcribe? And is this the paragraph for writing which he ought to have wished his right hand burnt from his arm? Yes, reader; because he asserts that the greatest servants of the Most High God stood as much in need of the grace of God the last day they lived as the first day they knew him; and to shew us that we have no accessions of strength or holiness *in ourselves*, but what we derive daily and hourly, yea, momentarily from him! Had I by such a malignant expression prejudiced the christian world against the writings of so able and useful a minister of Christ, I should rather have thought the hand that wrote it deserving of the flames! On the supposition, that in developing the anatomy of the human heart, he had used language to suit his purpose, as revolting to a delicate taste as some of the prophets have used, is he therefore to be held up to universal odium, reprehension, and reproach?

The Doctor follows up the preceding paragraph, which brought on him such a severity of censure, with an humble acknowledgment of his own vileness before God. 'Gracious Lord Jesus! I desire,' saith he, 'to lay low in the dust before the Divine Majesty, under a conscious sense that I find nothing progressive of holiness in my body, which is virtually

all sin; "for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing!" Yes, blessed Lord, let me go softly all my days under a deep sense of it, learning more and more my own nothingness, that I may therefrom, under God the Holy Ghost know how to value more and more thy fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. And if the daily workings of my heart do but endear my Lord the more to me, I am content to be indeed nothing, yea, worse than nothing, that Jesus may be glorified.[a] Mr. Cottle acknowledges the same truth in verse, though he seems to deny it in prose:

> "I breathe pollution every hour,
> My heart is far from thee;
> And nothing but Almighty power,
> From hell can rescue me."—*Psalm* xxxvii. *Cottle's Version.*

Dr. Hawker and his associates have been charged with saying, that 'sin cannot hurt the christian, nor hinder his final happiness.' Perhaps Mr. Cottle does not know, that in the sense in which these gentlemen view it, the same doctrine is inculcated in the Homilies of the Church of England. In the Homily against the fear of death, (second part) it is thus written—'Death cannot deprive them of Jesus Christ, nor can *any sin* condemn *them* that are grafted surely in him, which is their only joy, treasure, and life.'

To shew what a deep view this devoted minister of Christ had of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, one quotation will suffice from a small work, entitled, 'The Portrait of the Church,' which he published this year. After drawing the attention of the reader to the several descriptions of Christ's sufferings given by the holy evangelists, and whilst contemplating his agony in the garden, when "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," he adds—'I pause over the trembling subject! such views of Christ can only form the true mirror for beholding sin in its real colours. There are no events in human life, in all the accumulated and

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[a] Vol. X. page 196.

aggravated forms of misery that can describe what it is in its heinousness, or convey an idea of the baleful malignity of it. The drowning of the world by water at the deluge, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, the whole earth as one hospital of sorrow and woe, yea, hell itself with its everlasting burnings; let all be taken into one aggregate—nay, suppose the whole creation of God was offered up as a burnt-offering for human transgression, all could not demonstrate in equal characters the tremendous nature of sin, as that of the Son of God in becoming incarnate, and sweating a bloody sweat, from the agony of his mind, under the pressure of it. He and he only felt the full effects, for he only knew it in its nature, though but by imputation.'[a]

The year 1824 was opened, as was usual with him, in greeting the spiritual church of Christ on some interesting subject. The subject chosen for the commencement of this year was—'Death Abolished, and Life and Immortality brought to Light through the Gospel.' The introduction, from which I have already made a quotation, indicates a mind that daily holds converse with another world, and is ready to shake hands and bid a last adieu to this. It breathes the language of holy confidence and joyful anticipation of a glorious immortality. It was not because his voyage had been stormy, or because he feared any future perils, that he wished himself in port; for he knew, that the vessel in which he was embarked had an unerring pilot at the helm, and, what bespeaks the almightiness of his power, "gathereth the wind in his fists," Prov. xxx. 4. He rejoiced in the blessedness of his state. 'In the overwhelming view,' saith he, 'of such goodness in the past, I find the greater confidence to trust the Lord for all that is to come. I can and do say with Paul, and from the same well-grounded faith as his was; "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day,"

[a] Vol. VII. page 141.

2 Tim. i. 12. I am therefore, as he was, when he so expressed himself, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." 'Death in nature,' saith he, (and what he spake he appears to have felt) 'is more a privilege to the Lord's people than an evil; for the sting of death is sin, and that the Lord hath taken out, when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Nay, sin being removed, death ceases to be death, it is but a sleep; where, after the example of our most glorious Christ, the dead in Christ retire, as into their chamber of repose, until the resurrection morning. In death they are freed from all the sorrows, pains, and toils of life. They sleep in Jesus!'[a]

In the preceding year, he had added a chapter or two to his 'Zion's Pilgrim,' and purposed an enlargement; 'but,' saith he, in its continuation, which appeared in the Gospel Magazine, for July, 1824, 'time had hastened so fast since I began to sketch those outlines of my advanced pilgrimage, that the revolution of another year had imperceptibly stolen upon me, and I found in the arithmetic of my days, the hand-hour of my life now pointing to *seventy-one*. The fragments, therefore, which remain to be filled in, whether few or many, as the wisdom which cannot err hath appointed, must henceforth commence from this period.' 'Will the reader of my journal,' continues he, 'pause to question what attainments I have made in the life of grace during the past year? Truly the ledger of every day, as it concerns my improvement, if it were added together, would leave but a cypher at the bottom. Amidst innumerable mercies with which my bountiful Lord hath strewed my path, and manifested his loving-kindness to me on the right hand and on the left, I can discover nothing on my part but continued cause of humiliation before God. My daily walk of barrenness too nearly resembles the pro-

[a] Vol. VII. pages 552, 566.

phet's description of the heath, "which doth not see when good cometh," Jer. xvii. 6. And let some men say what they will of a progression of holiness in the creature, I am free to confess that I know it not. It forms no part in my creed, neither do I find it in my experience. How the Lord deals by others is not for me to judge. But in relation to myself, since the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, and to reveal his Son in me, I have been led into deeper discoveries of my own creature-corruption; as through divine teaching I have been brought into further knowledge of the Lord. And the result to this hour is, that in proportion as I have found the fulness, and suitableness, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ to my state and circumstances, "when I myself am weighed in the balance, I am found wanting!" "*

Such were the humbling views which this man of God had of himself, which may serve to console many an aged pilgrim who groans under the same burden. Indeed, the freedom and candour which he felt in declaring his own feelings, largely qualified him to administer consolation to others. Strangers from various parts would also consult him under the spiritual maladies with which they laboured, and for whom he could not but feel a deep interest when he saw the artifice with which Satan held them bound. From this very circumstance, he was led to speak freely and fully of the abounding grace which is in Jesus for the chief of sinners.

The following letter is given by him as a full illustration of the influence which Satan holds over the human mind; and his own observations upon it is a full illustration of the tender feelings of his heart towards such as groaned beneath Satan's chain. 'Oft hath it been spread by me,' saith he, 'before the Lord, and scarce a visit have I made in private to court without again and again mentioning the case to the King. And it is a maxim, which through a long life I have closely observed, and never seen to fail, namely, that when-

* Vol. III. page 174.

ever the Lord gives the spirit of prayer, the Lord answers it in mercy.' The following is a copy:—

'SIR,

'A very unhappy person, *desolate* in mind, once applied to you to implore your prayers through Christ for peace and pardon. I was then quitting England for another clime; but no clime can heal a wounded spirit! I am now returning to my miserable home, for I know no other but that which is misery; and I once more write to you to implore your prayers, that God would look with pity on the being, whom for eighteen years he has pursued with his fiercest wrath, and save and restore me to his fold! As my years decline, my sorrows increase; and I see only self-destruction before me in spite of struggles and fervent prayers. And now again I cannot pray, the power is worn out—a sort of inanity overwhelms me that proceeds from despair—I write this in the fields—I cannot bear observation—I am gone—pray for me, and hold sacred my———'[a]

Here the letter ended. It appears as if the writer intended to have added his name, but did not. It was written on a wretched scrap of paper, and fully pourtrayed the desolate state of the writer's mind. O how precious is the preaching which makes Christ all and in all, to such poor bewildered and disconsolate mourners!

As was usual in preceding years, the preface of one of his publications this year bears date the memorable 13th of April; its title, 'Visits to and from Jesus upon interesting occasions, and in the most hallowed moments of life.' In the introduction, he says with his usual humility, 'I have ventured to intrude one labour more of mine, in this little work, upon the church of Christ. Hastening fast as I now am to the close of life, these intrusions will soon be over.' The first is entitled, 'A Morning Visit from Jesus;' in which he says, 'I am no stranger to the day-dawn visit of Jesus.

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[a] Vol. III. page 216.

Many a morning before the world is up have I found cause to say, "He wakeneth morning by morning," Isa. l. 4. Nay, I think I should not err, were I to add, that sometimes, and not unfrequently, the manifestations of my Lord's presence have been so striking, in the first moments of recollection, as if called from sleep for the express purpose of communion.'[a] 'Come then, my honoured Lord, and day by day grant me the renewed visits of thy love. Draw back the curtains of my heart, and bid my soul, good morrow! "Be thou as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4."[b] I have heard him say, that it was his custom every morning, as soon as he was awakened, almost invariably to repeat the *fourteenth* chapter of the gospel of St. John. It is Jesus speaking to his disciples a word of comfort, and he has ofttimes found it a heart-cheering and soul-refreshing season, to hear the Lord Jesus speaking to him the same gracious words with an emphasis that could not be mistaken.

Considering the numerous and illiberal attacks which were made upon his doctrines and character, he might be thought by some to be ofttimes in deep waters; but no man enjoyed more tranquillity of mind. Whatever clouds were without, there was sunshine within. 'To be ill-spoken of,' saith he, (in a letter of thanks to the editors of the Gospel Magazine, for their handsome conduct towards him,)[c] 'by the advocates of *free will* for proclaiming the doctrines of *free grace*, is an ancient, an honourable badge, worn by all that are alike indifferent, while preaching the distinguishing principles of the gospel, whether by honour or dishonour, by evil report or good report. It is indeed no small dignity to be branded as Paul was, when called "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." Such a standard it is well to take with us when we go forth to the glorious Nazarene without the

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[a] Vol. VII. page 225. [b] Vol. VII. page 232.

[c] Gospel Magazine, for 1824, page 73.

camp, bearing his reproach. Methinks it is a pity, that they should combine in one subject matters so irrelevant to each other, as the gospel of Christ and a person of so little note as Robert Hawker! It is of eternal moment what is said and what is believed concerning our most glorious Christ: but what is said or believed of me, and of my insignificant life, even while I live, is of no importance; and when I die (as very shortly must be the case) my remembrance will soon cease among men, as though I had never been. Whence, therefore, so much ardour, and why are men so hot in their military warfare, to level their arms against a poor, solitary, and now almost worn-out soldier, in the camp of free grace; as if determined, that more or less the whole battalion of free-willers, either in grand divisions or sub-divisions, shall make him their target.'

'For several years last past I have been so much in retirement, that with the exception of attending ordinances in the house of God I am never seen in public. Did my opponents know how totally unacquainted I am with their contumely, whether in speaking or writing, they would certainly relinquish their fruitless attempts to give me pain by their reproaches. I never myself see any of their publications, and what I casually hear never excites more displeasure than the hectic of the moment. They are as transient as snow-balls, which little wanton boys throw at passengers, which melt before they wound.'

Thus, (saith an advocate of his doctrines, who had quoted the above paragraphs,) he like

> ——————"Atlas,
> Whilst storms and tempests thunder on his brow,
> And oceans break their billows at his feet,
> ——— Stands unmoved."

The advocate I refer to, is the Rev. James Jacks of Nottingham, who ably defended his system of theology, (if a system it is to be considered,) against the attacks of the Rev. Isaiah Birt of Birmingham, which was published this year

with this title; 'The Moral Government of God, in the Dispensation of the Gospel, vindicated, in Observations on the System of Theology taught by the Rev. Dr. Hawker, Vicar of Charles, Plymouth.' The very title insinuates, that Dr. H. paid little or no respect, in his body of divinity, to the moral government of God; than which nothing can be more false, if falsehood will admit a comparison.

From this pamphlet it appears, that Mr. Birt has in his own mind, by abstract reasoning, separated the divine sovereignty of grace from the moral government of God; and with this distinction in view, he charges Dr. H. with maintaining the sovereignty of grace in almost every page, whilst the moral government of God, if not totally, is greatly neglected. Surely Mr. B. does not mean to say, that Dr. H. maintained the divine sovereignty of grace and not at the same time the moral government of God? I know not what others may conceive on the subject, but it appears to me a gross libel, if we may so speak, on the divine sovereignty of grace, to separate it for a moment, even in idea, from the moral government of God. If the sovereignty of God be inculcated almost in every page, is it not connected with the reign of grace in the heart? And what is this but a moral government established there, against which the evil propensities of our carnal nature are continually rebelling? In the very paragraph which Mr. B. has quoted as a specimen of his preaching, does he not say, 'that the person, glory, grace, blood-shedding, righteousness, and finished salvation of our Lord are the glorious doctrines I preach—these I make the ground-work of all *practical godliness*, and without which nothing of *true godliness* can arise in the soul?' The courteous reader will permit me to ask, is there no moral government in all this? I have known Mr. B. from my boyish days, and still retain a respect for him; but I am grieved that I cannot justify this attack of his on the venerable Pastor of Charles. He is certainly less violent and acrimonious than some other opponents; but there is a mis-

representation in his language, and a want of fairness in his statements.

I will instance this only, from many of a similar import. In his Comment on the 4th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Dr. H. thus writes of the third person of the glorious Trinity:—'We behold him here under many of those most gracious characters in which *the Lord Jesus promised him.* As the Lord the Spirit is the founder, so is he the governor, preserver, teacher, comforter, sanctifier, of the church in all ages.' Mr. Birt only cites the last sentence of the above quotation, and says in connexion with it:—'The government and present salvation of the church he either directly or indirectly ascribes *exclusively* to the Holy Ghost;' and adds, that such views of the divine economy in the government of the church are incorrect and unscriptural. This is by no means a fair statement; for no man more pointedly or fully ascribes the government of the church to the holy Three in One; and even in the first part of the above quotation, Dr. H. refers to the promise of the Lord Jesus "to send the Spirit," John xv. 26. which surely is not to ascribe to the Holy Ghost an exclusive government! In his zeal to decry the Holy Spirit's government in the church, Mr. B. asserts, 'that the apostles neither speak of themselves, nor are they spoken of in the holy scriptures, *as the servants of the Holy Ghost.*' What means then this text, which not only refutes the last assertion, but shews that the Holy Ghost is the appointer of the chief servants in the church of Christ, and consequently the Governor—"Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the *Holy Ghost* has made you *overseers?*" Acts xx. 28. My view of the holy Trinity is, that whatever in the government of the church is ascribed to one, is ascribed to all. "He that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father," and no one can honour either without ascribing collaterally equal and undivided honour to the Holy Ghost.

'Whilst writing,' says Mr. Birt, 'I have lying on the

table ten different tracts written by the Doctor, all of which I have read with more than common diligence, and am really not aware that a single gospel precept is enforced in any one of them.' Does Mr. B. mean to assert, because no gospel precept be expressly quoted, that no gospel precepts are there inculcated? He might lay the same charge against the interesting history of Joseph, unless this be accounted one, "See that ye fall not out by the way;" but surely no one would say this is the only gospel precept inculcated in this sweet portion of holy scripture! 'In the section where he makes this charge,' as Mr. Jacks remarks, 'Mr. B. has only mentioned *two* of those tracts, namely, 'The Heirs of Promise,' and 'God's Will and Man's Shall.'' In the former, the Doctor tells us, 'that if the reader in his own instance can clearly ascertain the precious assurance of being called by grace from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son; he hath the most decided testimony which can be given of being among the heirs of promise; for this *holy calling* is the unerring character of a child of God. And connected with this, he tells us, that Peter's *advice* (or gospel precept) comes in here very admirably, when he bids the church "to make their calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10.'[a] In the last-mentioned tract, he states, 'that such assurances as are grounded on the covenant promises of a covenant God in Christ, are admirably calculated to beget holiness in the heart of every believer.' 'What,' saith he, 'can as effectually secure the honour of God's laws as the grace of God in the hearts of his people? Who is most likely to be examples of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity; the regenerated child of God, who undertakes nothing but in divine strength, and desires nothing but the divine glory; or the man who makes his own free will the standard of his endeavours, and depends more upon an arm

[a] Vol. X. page 108.

of flesh than in the power of God?'[a] Surely the reader will not be at a loss to find many a gospel precept inculcated here; and although not worded in the imperative mood, it is evident that there are inculcated by Dr. Hawker, even in this tract, high obligations to obey God, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity, which arise from his high commands, or from the aboundings of his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, though Mr. Birt may assert the contrary. All the sections of his book are too highly varnished, and will not bear the touch of truth.

In the month of May this year, 1824, was commenced, 'The Spiritual Magazine, or Saints' Treasury;' for which he wrote an introductory discourse, entitled, 'The Mystery of the Kingdom of God given to be known only to the Children of the Kingdom,' Mark iv. 11. 'In the character of those our Lord describes in Matt. vii. 24—27. as *hearing* his sayings and *doing* them, we have,' saith he, 'the portraits of the men in the regeneration, unto whom is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. By regeneration, or the new birth, they are called forth to the exercise of the spiritual faculties the Lord hath given them. Hence they are spiritually alive to divine things; their eyes are enlightened to see the hope of their calling; they hear and know the joyful sound; they walk in the light of God's countenance. Every spiritual faculty is awakened and engaged.'[b] After expatiating on the subject, he concludes with this benediction: 'The God of all grace bless with his savour these words to those unto whom he hath given to know the mystery of the kingdom, and make that knowledge introductory to all spiritual understanding, "that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," Col. i. 9, 10.'

May Mr. Birt know the blessedness of finding his portrait here, in these brief sketches of christian character, and of

[a] Vol. X. page 78.

[b] Vol. X. page 472,

putting into practice the duties here enjoined; though he would fain have the world believe, that 'DR. HAWKER is defective in his exhibitions of the christian character and duties.' In a series of letters published in this Magazine, Mr. Birt has met with an opponent, who has shewn no small ability in analyzing and exposing the errors of judgment, the sophistry of argument, the perversion of language, and misrepresentation of facts, which are discoverable in Mr. Birt's 'Moral Government.' I need not add, that this Magazine, which treats of the spiritual things of Christ's kingdom, has in its *Treasury* that which is far more precious than the gold of Ophir, or the topaz of Ethiopia, Job xxviii. 16, 19. It holds forth the Lord Christ as the way, and the truth, and the life!

Some time this year, this indefatigable writer sent forth a work of much learning and research, entitled, '*The Portrait of an English Bishop of the Sixteenth Century.*' It furnishes the reader with many interesting particulars in the public and private history of our most learned and devoted bishops, about the time of the Reformation, and in the following age. It is replete with general information, and can scarcely be read by any one without benefit, and is well worth the perusal of the younger clergy. Though written after he had past his seventieth year, it shews the author to have been in the full vigour of his mental powers. Not one of all his productions exhibits a greater variety of reading, or embodies more matter in smaller compass. From what we may judge of this specimen, he would have shone as an ecclesiastical historian. 'It may be demanded,' saith he, 'wherefore give the portrait of a bishop of the *sixteenth* century, rather than of any other century? The answer is at hand. This was the era, which in reference to the religion of this country, might well be called the *golden* age of the church.' The motto in the title-page exhibits a miniature sketch of the author's design. It is the character of Archbishop Leighton, by Bishop Burnett. In the prelates

of that century, there was a close resemblance to the apostolic pattern. 'And what summed up and put a beautiful finish to their whole character, they lived what they preached, and taught only what they themselves practised. Some men talk well of God by books; but those men spake from the heart. The general feature of those saints of God corresponded to what Jerome said of Nepotianus, who by frequent and unremitting meditation of the scriptures had his mind so stored with them, that the father called him, 'a magazine of knowledge, and the library of Christ.' '[a]

But have we not here a striking delineation of the Doctor himself. From his frequent perusal of the scriptures, comparing spiritual things with spiritual; for to this he ascribed it, rather than to a tenacious memory, he was one of the best textuaries of his day. I know not his equal. More frequently than otherwise, when he quoted a text of scripture, he would immediately give the chapter and verse. Although in the ardour of his eloquence, he quoted one text after another in confirmation of his doctrine sometimes with great rapidity, yet such was his numerical acquaintance with the sacred volume, that he would with the greatest readiness and accuracy give both chapter and verse. Many, struck with his promptitude in this particular, have taken their bibles with them to see if they could detect him in any error of this nature, but with admiration have acknowledged the correctness of his references. He was a scribe well instructed, "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," Acts xviii. 24.

Although highly blessed of God, he had his trials in the church and his trials in his family; but he had learned even to enumerate all these among his blessings. It is obvious that he had suffered much this year from attacks made on his writings, from quarters whence perhaps he did not expect them; and, as before observed, in the November of this year

[a] Vol. VII. page 33.

he lost his youngest daughter; but what were his feelings under these dispensations our Zion's Pilgrim can himself best describe. 'The train of occurrences which hath taken place during another year of my eventful life, hath only tended in the operation to wean more from earth and to endear heaven. We unavoidably retain the early impressions received in our early years; and from the common propensity which we all feel to have the good opinion of our fellow-creatures in the meridian of life, it is not till old age, and then only through grace, that we can rise above it. Indeed I was matriculated into this divine science for some time before, when for a while I considered myself as called upon to contravene the contumely cast upon me. But the Lord hath taught me better. I now feel the sweetness of that holy scripture of our God, when he said, "in your patience possess ye your souls," Luke xxi. 19. Hence I have ceased to answer the numerous attacks of my opponents. I am told, that amidst their displeasure at my doctrine, they ascribe nothing immoral or reproachful to my person or conduct. The arrows in their several quivers are levelled at my preaching and writings—all is well! I have read of some who have found a peculiar sweetness in those words concerning our most glorious Christ, "for neither did his brethren believe in him," John vii. 5. Well may I be satisfied, therefore, under reproaches! And what can be so endearing as the consideration, that we are hereby in some measure brought into a situation like himself, "Whose image we are to be conformed to in all things, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29.

'And is it so, that the dispensation is of the Lord? Is it by such a process of grace that the Lord deadens our affections to the approbation of men, the more effectually to bring home the whole heart to God; and dashes the cup with bitterness, like the waters of Marah, where we had proposed to ourselves much sweetness? Henceforth would I learn the blessedness of that scripture, in this as well as in

a thousand other instances, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22. It was my mercy, that the Lord had brought me into this school and taught me those salutary lessons, or the events of the past year would have opened so many and so various an occasion for polemics, as could not have afforded me space to have defended myself from the several assailants during the campaign of the annual course "when kings go forth to battle," 2 Sam. xi. 1. But independent of these things, and indeed wholly unconnected with them, the Lord in his providence had appointed the greater part of my *seventy-second* year to a very different employment. In the infinite ordination of his wisdom, combined with his infinite love, the Lord called me aside to attend to the long sickness of my youngest daughter, and which his holy will was pleased to terminate in death.'

'True, the Lord by this appointment had inverted the general plan of his administration, which for the most part is shewn in children burying their parents; and where the younger survives the elder. But in the instance of my child's departure, she is gone before me; and the same Lord who ordereth all things in wisdom, and after the counsel of his own will, and who had appointed her my junior in time, had in a moment made her my elder in eternity. Solemnly but sweetly the Lord's word accompanied the Lord's bereaving dispensation, "Be still, and know that I am God!" Ps. xlvi. 10. It is an alleviation of the highest and most consolatory nature, when in the loss of those who are dear and near to us, we can and do say with one of old, "the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. xiv. 32. An *alleviation* did I say? That is too little upon the occasion, when the believer falls asleep in Jesus. The voice John heard, in vision from heaven, declared also such *blessed* who die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13. And beyond all doubt they are blessed, for they die in union with Christ, and are part with himself. In relation to my child, there were many precious tokens to

this assurance. She knew the Lord; she loved the people of the Lord; she loved the word of the Lord, and the ordinances of the Lord. True, all these were but *effects;* but such effects could not be without a *cause.* And God the Holy Ghost hath most blessedly shewn the cause, when saying by his servant John, "We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. O delightful consolation under all bereavements in separation by death!'

'But while I have all the comfort in respect to the departed that can be needed, I feel the void in the chasm made by her flight into the world of spirits. Blessed be God! she is gone beyond "the lion's den, and the mountains of the leopards." Her conflicts with sin are all over: her anxieties are for ever ceased. Her body will sleep till the resurrection-morn in the dust, undisturbed by any of those exercises which these are warring with who survive; and her spirit is for ever with the Lord! For myself, I have one less attraction than I had before to things below; and by so much I have my affections to things below brought into a narrower circle. Such are among the events of my *seventy-second year;* and if the Lord hath other bereavements to call me into in the *seventy-third,* sure I am, the trial his wisdom may think proper to send, his grace will be sufficient for. Take what the Lord may, all he takes was and is his own. In fact, all I have are merely the boons of his bounty, and not given, but lent. One gift indeed is given; namely, Christ, and that for ever: and having him, in him I have all things. The Lord hath given, and will give me grace, as I am now daily walking on the confines of another world, to be loosening connexion with this. And while his wisdom is withering my gourds, and breaking my cisterns, and the props of all earthly comforts are taking down, I shall find strength from the Lord to look off from the unsatisfying objects of sight, and realize the glorious objects of faith; and to be endowed with the same spirit as those holy men of old, who by always bearing about in the body the

dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also of Jesus was manifest in their mortal body. "For which cause (said they,) we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. end.'

It is pleasing to remark, in what a waiting position he always stood in these his last years, ever anticipating his Lord's message to beckon him away. In his renewed continuations of his 'Zion's Pilgrim,' he commonly concluded the account of his journey Zionward, with such a remark as this: 'To be occasionally continued, *if the Lord spare.*' 'To be continued as fragments occasionally, *if the Lord please.*' So at the close of the communication just quoted, he wrote thus: 'If life continues, and ought occurs the relation of which may be rendered profitable through divine teaching to the Lord's people, 'Zion's Pilgrim past Seventy' will again write, D. V. If not, the close of this life will perhaps be filled in by another hand.'[a] Who can read the preceding paragraphs, and not contemplate him in the last stages of his pilgrim path with pleasing admiration? Amidst the good report and the evil report which he shared, calmly he travels his up-hill road; the world receding, and heaven opening to his mental gaze. Yes, venerable saint, sweet were thy visions, and delightful thy prospects in the last wilderness stages which it was thine to make in thy sojourning here! Though he has been contemptuously represented as telling his congregation, that we shall be better employed in heaven than in singing songs;[b] yet he had learned "a new song, which no man can learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth," Rev. xiv. 3.

Though to his soul the sweetest melodies were the conso-

[a] Gosp. Mag. for 1825, page 226. [b] Cottle's Strictures, sec. edit. page 59.

lations of the gospel, yet he was no stranger to the charms of music. His proficiency in this science, in his younger days, caused his company to be much sought; but in the subsequent periods of his life, this talent, as well as every other with which the Lord had honoured him, was devoted to the best of purposes. There was no organ in his church, but the singing was attractive and devotional. In a full congregation crowded to the very ceiling, the swell of the voices which seemed to rise in full harmony of soul, as well as in full harmony of note, was grand and exhilirating. As a composer of music, he will not soon be forgotten. The '*Abba* Hymn,' the '*Ruach* Hymn,' the '*Amen* Hymn,' (the words as well as the music by the Rev. Dr. Hawker) have been long favourite tunes with many a lover of sacred song. In his own church they were sung with admirable effect. He also composed another hymn tune, called the '*Bethesda*,' and one for the Thirteenth Psalm, old version, which has been adapted to a well-known funeral hymn by Dr. Watts, ("Why do ye mourn," &c.) A musical composition of his, entitled 'the *Magdalene*,' was published in the Evangelical Magazine, for 1808. The words are also his, which have been already quoted in this Memoir. It was with him a hallowed recreation to sit down to the pianoforte, and play his chaunts *extempore*, adapting the music to the varied subjects of the psalm which he thus chaunted. His poetical compositions, which are but few, stand in need of the file; but, as he wrote for dying sinners and not for literary fame, he therefore deemed it expedient to dispense with the well-known rule of Horace:

——— "Nonumque prematur in annum."

Although here and there a verse may be found incorrect in metre or rhythm, yet in the soundness and sweetness of the sentiment, the reader will find ample compensation for this deficiency. The following verses are from a hymn, entitled, 'Union with Christ:'[a]

[a] Vol. X. page 775.

" Ye children of God and the Lamb,
Remember, when sorrows press sore,
Your Jesus did once feel the same,
When conflicts and trials he bore.

And still his redeemed should know,
He's Jesus the same in his love;
The foot can't be crushed below,
And the head be unconscious above.

And what a sweet thought for to bear,
By all where his grace he hath given,
His poorest on earth are as dear
To him, as his greatest in heav'n."

In 1825, he proceeded with the publication of his Village Sermons. One of them bears this remark in the title-page: 'Preached in the Parish Church of Charles, on the Lord's day Morning, after an absence of a few weeks in visiting other churches.' The affectionate manner with which he greets them at his return, shews what a union of hearts subsisted between him and his substitute, and their flock. There was no supercilious distance shewn by him towards his curate, as is ofttimes ungraciously witnessed in professing churches; but he addresses him and treats him as a fellow-labourer in the ministry; as may be seen by this exordium to his sermon:[a] 'When I last spake to you from this place, in taking leave of you for a short season as was then intended, I commended the whole church, with my fellow-labourer in the ministry and myself, to the Lord and to your prayers. And if I remember right, upon that occasion of a farewell, among other things I ventured to make use of the words of the apostle, which he addressed to the church of the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. " Wherefore also," said the apostle, " we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in

[a] Vol. IV. page 177.

you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." And I feel confident,' said the affectionate pastor to his people, 'that this hath been and still is most graciously accomplished by our most blessed God, who is a prayer-awakening, a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering God, in all ages of his church.' After shewing how in all things our covenant God fulfils all the good pleasure of his goodness, he says, 'It was under these impressions I left you a few weeks since; and am now, through the good hand of my God upon me, brought back among you again.'

During this absence he paid a short visit to Gloucestershire, where his popularity drew no small congregations, and where his friends felt no small pleasure to hear him preach in all its fulness, sweetness, and blessedness, the gospel of the grace of God; but his stay was short, as he purposed to have been in London at the anniversary of the Gospel Tract Society; in all the concerns of which he felt a deep interest. But indisposition prevented him from sharing the pleasure. In his letter to the committee, he says, 'I know not whether I ought to regret my inability of mingling with you on the day of your anniversary. We are taught by unerring wisdom, that, "to every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." I confess indeed, that had the Lord so appointed, the being with you on this solemnity, would have afforded me a pleasure of much gratification, and of the purest kind. For to be in any way connected with an institution whose first and ultimate object is the divine glory, in ministering to the welfare of his church, is in my esteem the most delightful employment the renewed heart is capable of enjoying this side heaven. And although, had the Lord so permitted, I am of too little importance to have rendered my personal attendance at all available, and too old to have been of use in a service of such magnitude, as the Gospel Tract Society embraces; yet in respect of myself, sure I am, that neither my insignificancy nor age would have blunted those finer sensations of the

soul, which, through divine quickenings, would have been excited and called forth into energy in such an assembly of the Lord's people. As, however, it is the Lord who wills this privation, I am content; and find cause to bless this ordination, in that he hath given me grace to blend my prayers with yours, on the occasion. And in this sense, I shall be with you. And far remote as I am in body, yet one in spirit, "joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." [a]

During his visit to Gloucestershire, I well remember the circumstance which he mentions in his last edition of the 'Zion's Pilgrim,'[b] when a neighbouring clergyman called upon the Doctor, and solicited him to give him his views of that text in Micah vi. 8. To whom the Doctor, *inter alia*, made these remarks: 'That as to doing justice, no man could do justice to God the Father, who did not acknowledge himself a hell-deserving sinner; and no man could love mercy aright, who did not love the Lord Jesus, the source of all mercy; and when any man had been taught these two lessons by the Holy Ghost, he would not fail to walk humbly with his God.' Though he did not mean to circumscribe the text to these views only, yet no man can say in verity that these views of it ought not to be taken; although Mr. Cottle has thought it prudent to throw his slur of censure upon it. The clergyman mentioned, was at that time an incumbent in Gloucestershire, whose pulpit would have been readily opened to this venerable servant of Christ, if he could have found time to have paid him a visit. He now fills an important station in another county, and preaches the great and glorious truths of Christ's everlasting kingdom.

This year, the Religious Tract Society, by a special advertisement, disclaimed all connexion between itself and the Gospel Tract Society. As the Doctor observed, from the singularity of this measure, it appeared, that some more

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[a] First Report, page 23.

[b] Vol. iii. page 19.

latent principle than the ostensible one assigned had given birth to this marked production. The ostensible reason given for this notice was, that several enquiries had been made respecting it. In his remarks on this advertisement, he gives at large this statement to shew wherein they differ: 'The Religious Tract Society considers all mankind alike salvable; the Gospel Tract Society acknowledgeth none but the election of grace. The *former* conceives, that the common ground which the churchman, dissenter, and foreigner jointly occupy, will bring about those evangelical principles in which all are agreed; the *latter* limits, according to scripture, "the remnant of Jacob in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, and as showers upon the grass," Micah v. 7. The *one* society professeth, that the most opposite principles may amalgamate into christian union of a general mass; the *other*, observing the divine command, desires to act instrumentally only in the Lord's hand, "to be as his mouth, and to take forth the precious from the vile," Jer. xv. 19. The Religious Tract Society contend, that there is a somewhat in every man by nature, by which he may be helpful to himself, and become instrumental to his own salvation; the Gospel Tract Society, following the decisive declarations of scripture, considers every man by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and incompetent to a single act but by regeneration to a spiritual life. The *one*, therefore, is for ever leaning upon some supposed goodness in the creature; the *other*, hanging wholly upon the righteousness of God. *This* sacrificeth to the unhumbled pride of human nature, in the merits and *free-will* of man; *that* gives the sole glory to the *free grace* of God. Hence, whilst the *one* goes only in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel; the *other* cherisheth the hope, from an hypothesis of its own creating, that on the large portion of common ground, jointly occupied by mankind, it shall ultimately convert the whole world!'[a]

[a] Vol. VII. page 622.

It is certainly a matter of regret, that so much of the language of *Ashdod* is blended with the language of God's spiritual Israel, in some of the publications of the Religious Tract Society. Their advertisement, which spake nothing friendly or brotherly, called forth not without reason all the animadversions which were made by the Doctor. It was from no want of urbanity in him, but from pure christian affection to them, that these remarks were given. The tracts of this society want a close revision from some well-instructed editor, who from the Lord's teaching knows how to distinguish the precious from the vile, the wheat from the tares, the gold from the dross; sentiments which demonstrate man's salvation to be wholly of God, from those which directly or indirectly represent man to be a co-partner in the great work of salvation.

As the year 1825 was opened by him, with a salutation to the church of Christ on this question, "Watchman, what of the night?" the year 1826 was opened with another of equal importance, "What think ye of Christ?" 'Great events,' saith he, 'are pending,' and marvellous are to be the forerunners (as taught us in scripture) by which will be ushered in the latter day glory; but amidst all the convulsions, with which the Lord will shake the earth, the church is impregnable; and this voice through all may be heard by every regenerated child of God: "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him!" Isa. iii. 10.[a]

On the first Lord's day of this year, as on several preceding years, he preached from this text, "The faithful God!" Deut. vii. 9. This sermon is published among his Village Sermons, and opens with these remarks: 'The church of God, which hath been accustomed to meet me in this place, will anticipate both my text and sermon, before that I mention either. It has been my plan, as many of you know, for several years in succession, to enter on the subject of my preaching in

[a] Vol. VII. page 559.

the new year, with making proclamation of God's faithfulness. You will give me credit for speaking the truth, when I say, that in all the circumstances of my eventful life during the past year, not one thing hath failed on the part of God's faithfulness, amidst all the faithlessness which hath appeared in mine.'[a] Speaking of the subject of his text, he observes: 'We shall enter upon the beauties of it with more advantage, under the divine teaching, if we look for a moment at the occasion which gave birth to it. The holy army was now arrived at the banks of Edrei, a small town on this side Jordan, situated in the front of the country of Bashan, and only *one stage, one remove* more before the people were to pass over Jordan. And with this view of the subject, this sermon becomes still more interesting, that our venerable friend had but one stage, one remove, *one year* more before he would be called to pass that swelling flood, of which Jordan is a type. Low indeed were the waters when he was called to pass over!

It pleased the Lord immediately after he had been permitted to make his declaration of the Lord's faithfulness to withdraw him from his sphere of useful labours and confine him to a chamber of affliction. It was a severe attack of inflammation on the lungs. In a farewell epistle to the spiritual church of Christ, on closing in his *seventy-third* year, in reference to the same event, he thus writes: 'The year had opened most gracious and lovely with the Lord's day, and I was enabled to be found at my post as usual. It hath been my custom for many a new year, in succession, to make proclamation to the church on that text of scripture, Deut. vii. 9. "The faithful God!" But whether on this occasion from a debility of which I myself was then unconscious, or whether from a more than ordinary exertion, when the public service of the holy day was over, I found myself in a state of indescribable weakness; since which I have been the Lord's prisoner at home, without once being able to go up to the house of the Lord.' This epistle bears date, Feb. 8th, 1826.

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[a] Vol. IV. page 238. [b] Vol. VII. page 634.

Twelve Lord's days was he withheld from the work of the sanctuary. 'Three months revolved,' saith he, in a preface to one of his Village Sermons, while the disorder remained; so that I lay unconscious, under his Almighty hand, what his sovereignty had appointed in respect to the termination. One thing I had assured myself, and which through every stage of the disease I never lost sight of; but with Paul could and did say, and from the same well-grounded hope as his, namely, that "Christ should be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 20, 21.' 'My appearing before the congregation this day, March 25th, 1826, testifieth the divine will. And although I have not strength to engage in my usual services, yet am I through mercy in a state of convalescence. In the intervals between the singing of the last psalm and the sermon, I found strength from the Lord to speak to his people the substance of what is contained in this sermon;' which was an illustration of Exodus xv. 26. "I will put none of those diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee." The introduction runs thus: 'Brethren, beloved in the Lord! I am not come out of the other world, neither am I come out of my grave, to speak to you this day of the grace and goodness of our wonder-working God! But the Lord, under whose divine hand of sickness, I have lain since I saw you last in this place, hath brought me from the borders of both, and preserved my life by a great deliverance. I am come, therefore, to make my first offering, as is most justly due to the God of my life, "in whose hand my breath is and whose are all my ways!" It is to his goodness must be ascribed, that we see once more each other's face in the flesh. Sure I am, that your thanksgiving will join mine; and that you will feel as holy men of old did, when one said to another, "O bless the Lord with me, and let us magnify his name together!" Ps. xxxiv. 3. And having first offered the tribute of praise to the Lord, I next turn to thank you. You have not only manifested

an abounding affection to my person, in your enquiries after me; but what is yet more than that, you have carried me in the arms of your faith before the Lord: and this day is the Lord's day for shewing himself herein a prayer-hearing God. But, brethren, I am not come at this time to re-assume my ministry among you. Indeed you may perceive too much debility in me for such a service. I am simply come now, only to relate to you some of the Lord's gracious dealings towards me, during this my confinement.'

After pointing out the difference of sickness between him that is in the unrenewed state of nature, and him that is called by sovereign grace, he added, 'I had intended to have said much more to you on this interesting subject, coming, as I have, immediately from my chamber of sickness, where these things have been realized to my soul's joy. But I find my strength unequal. One word more before I withdraw. I have before observed, that my appearance among you this day is not to enter at present on my ministry; until it shall please the Lord to renovate me for it. Those ordinances which I have in times past enjoyed in this place, must for a while be withheld from me. But I bend to his sovereignty, who thus appoints. Blessed be God, though I shall not have the ordinances, I have always the God of ordinances; and while I have the *substance*, I shall have no cause to regret in not having the *shadow!*' 'In the meantime, I commend you to the Lord, as I am persuaded you commend me. Your prayers will still follow me, as they have been called forth before. I feel very highly interested in them, both for myself and my brother in the ministry, whom I leave with you to go in and out before you in the word and doctrine. We both seek this from you as a boon from the Lord to the church.' With these and such like words he took his leave of his people, praying thus for their spiritual welfare in the close of his address: 'Great God! who inhabitest the praises of eternity! continue to manifest a prayer-awakening and a prayer-answering God. Pour out upon this hallowed spot

and the choice ones of thy flock, which from time to time assemble here before thee, the divine unction of thy Holy Spirit. Let the gracious influences of the Holy Three in One be felt, and known, and enjoyed, in sweet communion. Let thine eyes be upon this place, as upon Judah of old, from the one end of the year even to the other end of the year, and cause this place from thy continual presence to be called, "Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there."[a]

From thence he withdrew for change of air to what he calls in his letters, '*his station of exile at Totness*,' where he continued a few weeks, with his daughter. On his return, he preached his first Sermon on the commemoration of the day of Pentecost, and opens it in this animating manner: "Brethren, beloved in the Lord, I cannot tell you (indeed I know of no form of words in a way of utterance to tell you) what kind of joy of the soul that is, which I feel in meeting you here this day. I see so much of the Lord's goodness, in his wisdom blended with his love, as marked in the late providence of my sickness, and now having brought me back again from the borders of death and the grave, that I cannot but anticipate very great blessedness and enlargement of soul, both in myself and the Lord's people, during the remainder of my labours among you, whether the time shall be long or short. It is true, that with increasing years and increasing infirmities, my exertions cannot be what they have been. My sermons must necessarily be shorter, and my voice will be weaker. Time was, when as you know I had, through the goodness of the Lord, strength of lungs to fill this large church, so as to be heard to the most remote part; but the Lord's people of this church will now be satisfied, I hope, if what I have to deliver, be delivered with a trembling voice. Sure I am the great truths of God you have been accustomed to hear from me, will be the same, however faultering in my speech. I have

[a] Vol. VII. page 302.

but one glorious subject and which admits of no alteration, namely, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And in this I know, that, through the divine teaching, I shall be more and more enlightened, so that my last days will be my best days, to increase in all the increase of God.' 'Though I have been separated from you for eighteen Lord's days, yet I have not found the want of ordinances, having had the God of ordinances with me. And the Lord hath filled up all vacancies with himself. And it is himself in his Trinity of persons, that is now by faith, and hereafter will be in open vision, the glorious One to satisfy the boundless desires of our souls in holiness, and blessedness, and glory to all eternity.'[a]

Previous to his visiting Totness, the design had been formed of publishing an 'Uniform Edition of his Works.' The preface of the first volume bears date, 'Plymouth, Charles' Vicarage, April 13th, 1826.' The last birth-day which it was his lot to commemorate on earth, before the birth-day of glory, in Christ's eternal kingdom in heaven. His deep sense of the Lord's goodness towards him is legible through the whole. 'I cannot,' saith he, 'close my preface without pausing to observe, and in that observation to adore distinguishing grace, for preserving a life so marked with evil, (Ps. xxxvi. 1.) through a period of six and thirty years, (that is, 'since the publishing of the first edition,) and for enabling me to revise these my early labours.'[b] But perhaps nothing can exceed the unadorned eloquence of the preface to his 'Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost,' embodied in this volume; though it bear an earlier date, it is well adapted to the feelings he must have experienced, at this remoter period of his life. I refer chiefly to this paragraph:

'I am now fast hastening towards the boundary of time. With this great world and all its dying interests, I shall very

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[a] Vol. IV. page 308. [b] Vol. I. page 5.

shortly have no more concern than those who lived before the flood. According to the course of nature, I can have but a little space to fill in, before I shall go hence to be no more seen. The tide of that vast flood of eternity is rolling on with its mighty waves towards me, and must shortly reach the shore whereon I now stand, and will take me into its bosom. And, if I know any thing of my own heart, I am on the look-out for my Lord's coming, "with more joy, than they who watch for the morning; yea, I say, with more joy, than they who watch for the morning.—For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Like the church of old, I can and do say, "make haste, my beloved, until the day break and the shadows flee away." In the meantime, while remaining in the body and standing on this isthmus of time, I would fain gather together the few fragments of life which remain from my poor labours, and leave them behind me, as a love-token to the church of Jesus.'[a]

In his continuation this year of his 'Zion's Pilgrim,' he reverts thus to the days of his sickness, with which and in which the Lord was pleased to visit him. 'I might indeed occupy many a page in reciting somewhat of myself among the occurrences of my *seventy-third* year, just closed in. For the Lord has done by me, as by his servant the prophet Isaiah, "spoken to me by a strong hand," Isa. viii. 11. He hath taken me aside from ordinances and the society of men, to withdraw with him for communion with God. And as a man in friendship, when having some special thing to communicate to one he loves, takes him by the hand and leads him apart from all others, that he may make a stronger impression of what he hath to say upon his mind; so the Lord, by laying me down on a bed of sickness, and opening to my view nearer apprehensions of the invisible world, and his watchfulness over me, hath indeed spoken to me as

[a] Vol. I. page 429.

to the prophet, "by a strong hand," and left such tokens of his love, as through the remainder of my pilgrimage, whether long or short, will, through his grace, never be effaced.'[a]

He then records the departure of a fellow-traveller in the way to Zion, and gives a biographical sketch of this old acquaintance, whose exercises had been very singular and trying; 'but whose help from the Lord,' saith he, 'hath been like the blessing of Asher, whose foot the Lord dipped in oil, whose shoes were iron and brass, and as his days so was his strength.' This friend of his is no fictitious character; but the late Stephen Lowry, M. D. of Falmouth, whose Essays explanatory and experimental, upon a few select passages of scripture, were published in the year 1809, with a recommendatory preface by Dr. Hawker; for which he tells us he volunteered his service. 'From my very particular acquaintance and correspondence with him, I was made privy,' saith Dr. H. 'with all his embarrassments. Yet through all and in all he was enabled to stay upon the Rock of ages. But who can fail to admire the Lord mercifully timing his departure. When all human means ceased; divine faithfulness became conspicuous. When the brook Cherith dried, the Lord took him home to himself, an everlasting Fountain.'

'For myself, while I rejoice in his felicity, I feel,' continues he, 'the chasm his absence has made, in the little circle the Lord has left me here below.' There were but a few lights left of those with whom I spent my youthful days; but, by his removal, one more is put out: so that I am constrained sometimes to say; "Help, Lord! for the godly man faileth; the faithful are minished from among the children of men." The church below is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers! It is our departure hence that joins us to the great majority. Thither my friend is gone. And all his tears are for ever wiped from his eyes. The Lord be praised in his salvation. Thither also shall I shortly follow

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[a] Vol. III. page 229.

to see Jesus as he is, and to dwell with him for ever. Hallelujah !'*

This year the Doctor paid a visit to the metropolis, to preside at the Anniversary of the Gospel Tract Society. The Meeting was held at Freemason's Hall, which is supposed to hold three thousand persons. But at an early hour, the whole area, with the galleries, were filled; so that many, who came before the time appointed, could not gain admission. Although thronged to excess, yet all due order was preserved and the most profound silence prevailed; for amidst the great pressure of heat and the faintings, which compelled many to be carried out, the whole audience, during four hours fully occupied, evidently took a deep interest in all that was brought before them. The venerable president was led to the chair by the treasurer and the secretary, and after a few minutes' pause, in which he appeared in silent prayer to be seeking the Lord's assistance in the furtherance of the Lord's cause, he arose and addressed the Meeting. After he had spoken, the divine blessing was supplicated in an appropriate prayer, and the whole proceedings were conducted in the true spirit of christian love. At the close he took his leave of them :—' I am an old man going out of life, and cannot in the nature of things hope to see your faces any more upon any future anniversary. I therefore very cheerfully leave you with the Lord in whose Almighty hands I have lodged all my concerns for life and death, for time and eternity. I pray you to follow me in spirit to the throne, and with an eye to this institution, do not fail in every supplication for the Lord's blessing on it, to plead the Lord's own promise.' After a doxology was sung, the assembly dispersed, manifesting by the liberal collection, the interest they had taken in the proceedings.

On the Lord's day morning, July 16th, he preached for the last time, in the great city, in the Broadway Church,

* Vol. III. page 237.

St. Margaret's, Westminster, from that sweet portion, Zech. iii. 9. "And I will remove the iniquity of that land in a day." The minister of this church, the Rev. Mr. Mutter, bears testimony to the energy, zeal, and success, with which from time to time he preached in that church, the unsearchable riches of Christ. 'I have,' saith he, 'in his Funeral Sermon for Dr. H, 'in my ministerial duties in London, met with several walking humbly with their God, in the light and power of a divine faith, who have attributed under God all their divine knowledge to the preaching of Dr. Hawker; and I have good authority, from his own neighbourhood, to assert, that his preaching was a very fruitful ministration, as a means in the hand of God of turning many "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

On the Lord's day morning, August 27th, 1826, in the parish church of Charles, after his return from London, and after recovery from a renewed attack of sickness, he addressed his congregation on Isa. lxii. 10—12. It is the last of the Village Sermons; and entitled, 'The Lord casting up the way of his people.' I refer to it to shew what love he bore to his stated hearers, and what a desire he had for their spiritual welfare. He opens it thus: 'I have no words sufficiently strong to express the delight I feel, in being brought home, by the goodness of my God, to behold your faces once more in the flesh, and to stand up in my place before you this day. And after bending the knee in praise to the God of my life for these mercies, I would say to you, in the words of the apostle Paul to the church: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me," Rom. xv. 30. I have already apprized you, before my late departure, what you have to expect from my labours in what remains to be filled in, in my feeble and now almost worn-out life. For myself I feel, as the prophet speaks, "when the summer fruits have been gathered, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat." Micah vii. 1.

But I am comforted in the assurance of what the Lord said to the apostle, and which equally belongs to all his people: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9.[a] After enlarging on the doctrines contained in or connected with the text he had chosen, in the close of his sermon he bears this sweet testimony to the truths he had spoken. 'My brethren, it is of vast importance to know these things from divine teaching, and from the divine influence to live upon them. Nothing this side eternity can equal, as to these truths, the anointings of the Holy Ghost, in the heart, and mind, and conscience, that, from day to day, the Lord's people may realize them, substantiate them, make them our familiar companions, and by lively actings of faith upon each person in the Godhead be growing up into such an enjoyment of them, as to fill the soul, by anticipation of delight, with the glory that shall be revealed.'[b]

In the last day, which was also the last sabbath of this year, 1826, he preached on these words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." His appeal to his people at the close of it is interesting; but I must forbear quotations. In a letter to the writer of these Memoirs, dated Dec. 28, he makes mention of a peculiar dispensation which took place in his family this year. Of his three sons each lost a child. 'You see,' saith he, 'my dear friend, by my letter, that I am still in the body. Like an old hollow leafless trunk of the forest, over whose withering branches many a winter storm hath beaten, still not rooted up. At the opening of the year, after the first Lord's day, when making proclamation of the Lord's faithfulness, the gracious Lord gave me immediate proof of it, and laid me *aside*, and laid me *down*, that I might *feel* what I had *preached*. And when the gracious Lord raised me up, the Lord took one from each of my three sons' houses

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[a] Vol. IV. page 363.

[b] Page 373.

whilst I remained. So that now those children are my elders in eternity, that were my youngers in time. Thus the Lord sometimes inverts the order of things.'

In tracing the footsteps of this dear man of God in some of the eventful changes of his life, we are come to the threshold of the last year of his earthly sojourning. On the opening of the new year, 1827, in his salutation to the spiritual church of our most glorious Lord, he adopts for his subject the solemn demand of Christ—" When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii. 8. ' In a moment like the present,' saith he, ' the solemn demand of Christ becomes a matter big with the weightiest considerations, in the prospect of impending judgments; so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. The question is infinitely appalling to the most faithful among the Lord's people; but to every one unconscious of an interest and safety in Christ, the tremendous challenge is calculated to ring, like a peal of thunder, through all the chambers of the heart. And what answer can be given, in the millions of instances, among all such as have " the form, but deny the power of godliness?" It were almost needless to observe, that these words of our most glorious Christ, though put in a way of question, as if the matter were doubtful, are not so, but rather as a thing already known and settled. It is that kind of question which answers itself. It is, as if the Lord had said, it will be a rare instance to find any. I have thought the subject in itself highly interesting. And with those prophetic scriptures in our hand concerning the latter day, and the corresponding signs of the times before our eyes, I have thought nothing can be more suitable to form an address to the spiritual church of Christ, and to shew my affectionate regard in the entrance on a new year, than our Lord's own words, " When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" '

' Let it not be supposed,' continues he, ' that though these words of our most glorious Christ are expressed as extending

to all the earth, that I am going to trace the footsteps of enquiry so far. My little tract must be bounded with narrower limits. I cannot explore the subject beyond the skirts of our own shore. What continental researches might discover on this ground I know not. Though, if rumour be true, the greater part of Europe is sunk into a state of apathy to divine truth, or in subjection to any thing and to every thing that is inimical to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Where the papistical government doth not reign, infidelity hath erected her throne in the minds of the people; and to her sceptre all bend submissively, except 'that little band of men whose hearts the Lord hath touched," 1 Sam. x. 26. It is my mercy, that I have never left home to place a foot in those countries where such things are transacted. Happily I know nothing of them but from report. The most considerable part of my life hath been spent in the duties of my parish, within the sound of its church-going bell: so that little of this great world can I speak from personal knowledge. A few observations on our Lord's question, as may attach itself to the kingdom to which I belong, is all that I have to propose. And if they are as kindly received by the spiritual church of Christ as they are affectionately offered, my gratulations of the Lord's people, in the Lord's name, on the opening of a new year, will be accompanied I hope with the Lord's blessing.'[a]

His remarks on the concessions made to the papists, are not less true than striking:—'Popery, which was one time paralyzed in this land, now like the frozen serpent, brought by the incautious husbandman into a warm atmosphere, hath emerged from her benumbed state, and is endeavouring to recompense the kindness by biting our children. She hath unfurled her banners, and more than once attempted to gain again a legitimate footing in this kingdom. While with equal earnestness, but with more secrecy, infidelity, with her

[a] Vol. VII. page 605.

hydra heads, hath been at work to sap the very foundation of the christian church altogether, by digging up the very first principles of our most holy faith. What other portentous signs will appear before the dreadful crisis of the slaughter of the two witnesses, is not revealed; only in general terms it is said, "that men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," Rev. xi. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 1.'

It is remarkable, that in revising his 'Zion's Pilgrim' for the press, to be embodied in the 'Uniform Edition of his Works,' he entitles the last chapter—'The Close of Zion's Pilgrim past Seventy.' In the commencement of this chapter, he says:—'Little did I conceive, when this history recommenced, at the age of seventy, that it would have extended to this period. Nothing of materials was formed for that purpose to render it interesting; but only as events arose to mark them down, with an eye to the Lord's glory. But it is now time to close the whole of what hath neither novelty any longer to amuse, nor any thing beyond the common sameness in an old man's life, to attract regard. And the entrance on the spring of the new year, 1827, and the close of my seventy-fourth year meeting nearly together, renders the present moment peculiarly suitable for this purpose. For what can the withering circumstances of seventy-five bring forth to interest the feelings of any? In taking a farewell upon this occasion of the readers of my history, I thought the gracious words of the Lord to the patriarch Abraham might not be unsuitable, by way of leaving a divine impression, from scripture, upon the minds of the Lord's aged ones, who like myself are now waiting for the Lord's coming; that whether at midnight, or cock-crowing, or in the morning, when Jesus shall call, we may instantly arise and hail with joy his approach. It was with those ideas, the last sermon I preached in my church before my seventy-fourth year had fully ended, I brought before the Lord's people that precious proclamation the Lord himself

made to Abraham :—" And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect."'*

From this text he preached what may be called his own funeral sermon. No fitter subject could be chosen wherewith our Zion's Pilgrim could more appropriately finish his labours. In his view of the Lord's manifestation of himself to Abram, he connects with it the manifestation pledged in the 14th chapter of St. John. He affectionately recommends the daily study of this chapter to the whole regenerated church of God, and especially to the aged. He then adds :—

I blush not to say, that not a day doth it pass away from my remembrance; and not unfrequently in the night watches do the blessed portions of it pass and repass over my mind in the sweetest accents.' He proceeds to analyze the chapter, and then exhorts the children of the kingdom to ponder these things, and then to say, 'whether the grace shewn to Abram when ninety years old and nine, was of a singular nature, while such blessed provisions of a higher kind are, or are supposed to be, in the daily enjoyment of all the Lord's chosen.'

This his last sermon closes with this appropriate address :—

Brethren, farewell! you that are among the ancient of the Lord's pilgrims have seen and have passed through many cloudy days and cloudy dispensations; but God's faithfulness hath been manifested through all. Jesus speaks to each as to the patriarch, " I am the Almighty God!" Keep this always uppermost. Lose sight of self, and all that you are subject and object of, to hang wholly upon him that is *El Shaddai*. He that appeared to Abram, when he was ninety years old and nine, will appear to you and fulfil his own promise—" I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." And those are among

* Vol. III. page 237.

the last and closing acts of the Lord's everlasting love; namely, *His* it is to keep you from falling, and *His* no less to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, Jude 24. To the holy Three in One be endless praise! Amen.'[a]

This last chapter was in the press, when the intelligence of the death of the venerable author reached the publisher. The manuscript of which only came into his hands, March 9, 1827, which was scarcely a month before his deccase. The publisher, in a brief note, solicits the attention of the reader to the pleasing and remarkable suitability of the final literary labour of the respected author. Whilst our Zion's Pilgrim makes the last effort to raise himself from his couch, to record the last page of his history, and to cheer the ancient of the Lord's pilgrims with assurances of the Lord's faithfulness and truth, his last, dying, swanlike note breathes sweetest melody. The last sentence his heart dictates and his hand writes, in the records of his pilgrimage, is,—'To the holy Three in One be endless praise! Amen.'

As if anticipating a speedy removal, near the close of the last year he sent in his resignation by letter *to the Committee in the government of the Gospel Tract Society,*[b] of which letter the following is the chief part:—'Brethren, beloved in the Lord! having, through sovereign mercy, lived to see your Society, after three year's trial, now as I hope well established, I beg to give in my resignation of President and final Editor, in order to withdraw, as time admonisheth me, from all public places but the church of God; to wait in retirement, and meditation, and prayer, for the hour of my Lord's call to take me to himself, that where Jesus is, I may be also. Though from age and increasing infirmities, I find it expedient to withdraw myself from forming a part of your Committee, where I have no longer any efficiency,

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[a] Vol. III. page 250.

[b] Third Report, page 12.

yet I trust through grace to follow you with prayer, as long as I remain in this tabernacle, that the Lord God will continue to grant his influence in crowning your labours with success, and thus manifesting that his favour is with the Gospel Tract Society. Committing and commending you to the Lord, I remain, brethren beloved, yours, in the Lord,

'ROBERT HAWKER.'

November 11, 1826.

In the opening of the year 1827, he was again visited with his old complaint, an inflammation in the lungs, attended with a violent cough. It was milder in its attack than in the preceding year. As soon as he became convalescent, his earnestness to be employed in his Master's service induced him (contrary to the advice of his medical friend and the wishes of his family) to reassume his public ministry, or at least to bear his testimony once more to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, before he took his departure for Totness; and from thence, if the Lord permitted, to go by easy stages into Gloucestershire. Indeed two days only before his decease, he spake of this to his daughter, making this remark, 'we wait my dear, the Lord's leadings.' He had also some thought of extending his journey to the metropolis, but the Lord had otherwise appointed.

It was on the 18th of March, he again took his post in the parish church of Charles for the last time. And, as if forgetting himself, so much was he absorbed in his subject, and so lively and ardent were his feelings, that he preached no less than one hour and a quarter. Nor was it sufficient to have preached in the morning, but in the evening also he delivered a lecture, as was his custom, by way of exposition, which occupied the same space of time. In this divine employ he felt so much delight, that when once engaged in this work, nothing but complete exhaustion could cause him to desist; but this was dangerous in his circumstances. Had he known that this was to be the last time that he was to

exercise his ministry among them, he could not have manifested more warmth of feeling, more earnestness in his appeals, or more animation in the delivery. Nor could his discourses have been more appropriate. He spake as a dying patriarch to his surrounding family. His affections seemed to glow with renewed ardour, his doctrine to distil with a peculiar sweetness; the aboundings of grace was his theme, and the joy of the Lord was his strength. But this lengthened exercise of his lungs was too much for him. From the exertions of this day, the symptoms of his disease again returned; and, humanly speaking, this brought on the solemn event. Preaching was his element; and as preaching was the solace of his life, so preaching was the cause of his death. He might truly be said to have died in his military harness. Like a veteran warrior who had attained an eminence in the battle-field, and wished others to follow him to the same vantage ground, whilst waving the imperial banners and encouraging others to press on towards the mark of their high calling, this standard-bearer in our British Israel fell, and in the only true sense 'covered with glory.'

But to return to the narrative. On the following sabbath, the 25th of March, when he found himself unable to follow up his ministerial labours, and heard the sabbath-bells admonishing the people to prepare for the engagements of the sanctuary, he remarked to his daughter, Miss Hawker, 'These bells, my dear child, which are calling others to tread the courts of the Lord's house, are not calling me. *I* cannot go to the house of the Lord; but "this also cometh of the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working—wisdom and power are his." On Monday, March 26, early in the morning from the rupture of some small vessel, and probably from his late exertions, he vomited rather more than a pint of blood which also occurred again on the Tuesday, but the discharge was in a smaller quantity. From this, however, he appeared to be somewhat relieved. On the Wednesday he proposed to visit Totness, the residence of his third daughter, Mrs. Ball

in the hope that change of air might be blessed of the Lord to his convalescence, as in the former year; and, if so, to proceed on his intended journey.

In the morning before he left home, he addressed the following letter to his fellow-labourer in the ministry, the Rev. Septimus Courteney, at that time his curate, which shews how deeply interested he felt for the spiritual welfare of his people.

'PLYMOUTH, THURSDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1829.

'DEAR SIR, AND BROTHER IN THE LORD,

'I greet you in Him in whom we have oneness and access by faith, and are one with him to all eternity! I request you to be medium of conveying to that part of the Lord's spiritual church in our most glorious Lord, who meet in christian fellowship and communion in *Charles*, my warmest, best, largest, and never-ceasing regard. Tell them on my departure, that I love them in the Lord, and that my earliest and latest prayers are and will be for their spiritual knowledge of and communion with the Holy and Almighty Recorders who bear witness in heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, until faith is swallowed up in open vision, and "until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" and say for me thus further, that while I bear *them* in my arms before the throne, they will not fail to remember *me* when going in before the King. For yourself, dear Sir, and your ministry, I have often, and shall continually leave prayers at the mercy-seat, that great blessings may go before and follow your labours of love. What the event of my departure will be, is with Him who cannot err, and with whom I cheerfully leave it. And so commending and committing you to the Lord, I remain, in the dust before God, in the consciousness of my nothingness and the Lord's all-sufficiency, your's, in the Lord,

'ROBERT HAWKER.'

After taking this affectionate leave of his people beloved in the Lord, he proceeded on his journey, and bore it much better than was expected, and seemed to enjoy the change. The day after his arrival, he took an airing with Mrs. Hodson, and found it refreshing to his enfeebled frame, on which he made this observation, 'This air will be balm to my lungs.' But on the following day, he was not so well; and from this period, he might be said to decline in bodily strength, though strong in faith, and cheerful in the prospect of a glorious immortality. During the whole of his last confinement, he seemed to enjoy uninterrupted communion with God. On one occasion, when apparently waking from sleep, his daughter, who had assiduously watched over him, made enquiry, how he felt after the refreshment of sleep. He replied, 'my dear anxious child, I have not been asleep, as you suppose; but I have had what is far better. I have been in the world of spirits. I have had blessed communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: I shall have, if the Lord see proper to raise me up, unutterable things to tell the church; my soul is overfilled with joy; my spirit hath not room for its enjoyment; I am full of glory.'

Soon after, with a degree of animation not to be described, he broke forth in a sweet strain of praise, quoting Isa. lxiii. 7. "I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us." He then proceeded to repeat the whole chapter, dwelling sweetly on this verse, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." When reminded by Mrs. Hodson, that he was exerting himself too much, he acknowledged it, lowered the tone of his voice almost to a whisper; but continued rehearsing the whole chapter, and commenting thereon as he proceeded. He dwelt much on the distinction of character herein made. "The people of *thy* holiness, and *our* adversaries, that have trodden down thy sanctuary." So

also on that made in the 19th verse between *we* and *they*. A grand and interesting distinction! What a blessedness was his who could in such an hour adopt the language of this closing verse—*We are thine!*

Finding that he did not get better, he proposed to his daughters, Thursday, April the 5th, to return to Plymouth, making this remark, 'We can as well set out on our intended journey from thence as from here.' Preparations were therefore made for his return. The night before he left his daughter, Mrs. Ball, at Totness, he read to the family the twenty-third Psalm, and commented on the different verses, particularly on the *shadow* of death; observing, that indeed it was nothing more than a *shadow*. On the Friday morning he rose early, and made a comfortable breakfast. After commending his daughter and family in prayer to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, he took his leave, and seemed pleased with the thoughts of home. Whatever impressions might have crossed their minds, that this might be the last interview to be shared on earth, there was not the slightest anticipation that his decease was so near at hand; or to use language more adapted to his own scriptural creed, that this was fixed in the settlements of eternity to be his coronation-day. It is surprizing, that a man so enfeebled by age, and labouring under such a complaint, could endure a journey of so many miles, apparently with so little fatigue, only a few hours before his death. The first stage to Ivy-Bridge, he bore admirably well, took there a little refreshment, and pursued his journey. When within a few miles of home, he began to shew a little languor and uneasiness; but nothing to excite any apprehension of immediate danger. He desired to be driven at a slower pace, saying he was a little weary; but revived again when his own church-spire presented itself to view. He clasped his hands, and lifted his eyes to heaven, which had lost none of their usual lustre, and appeared to have his mind drawn out in sweet and hallowed musing, whilst at a distance he contemplated the beloved

spot which had been the scene of his labours. Blended with the gratitude which glistened in his eye, the enquiry seemed legible in his countenance—Shall I be again employed in that favoured spot, or are my labours ended?

On his arrival at his dwelling, (about a quarter past three o'clock) he was assisted from the carriage; but he had not entered many minutes before he called his household together, and set up his Ebenezer of praise; for, as his family testify, he seemed to have done with prayer, as if he had nothing more to ask. It was all praise, thanking the Lord for his mercies in taking him out and bringing him home; and raising his voice to give an emphasis to his last words, he said, "Praised be our God, for his mercy endureth for ever." To his family he said, 'I shall not be long with you, I am leaving you; but God will still be with you.' Very shortly after, he was removed to his chamber, but was able to assist in undressing himself for bed. After being a little composed, and raised with pillows to a sitting posture, he repeated *memoriter* a part of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians from the sixth to the twelfth verse: and as he proceeded he enlarged on the verses, but dwelt more fully on these words, "to the praise of the glory of his grace;" and very sweetly on these, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace;" and also on the twelfth verse, taking up the subject of praise again, "that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." He paused, and then asked, 'who first trusted in Christ?' And then made him self this answer, 'it was God the Father who first trusted in Christ.' This was a happy thought for the moment, and shews that his imagination was active and lively to the very last; though the original text, which could not have been present to his memory at the time, will not bear that construction. The translation would have shewn more of the bearings of the original, if the words had been thus arranged —that we, who first trusted in Christ, should be to the prais

of his glory. But this was no time for dry criticism, nor even here scarcely for me to introduce the remark. But his mind seemed filled with delight whilst he dwelt upon these words, "to the praise of his glory!" This was his last comment on the word of God, and it not only proved a sweet, interesting, and affecting comment to those who surrounded the bed of the departing saint, but it opens a volume of evidences in proof of the excellency of the doctrines which the Lord had taught him; for who, among all the elders of the churches, was more holy in his life, or more triumphant in his death? There was a holy serenity in his countenance, which spake the inward aboundings of joy and peace through faith in Christ Jesus.

On his medical friend coming in, who had gone to Totness to visit him, but on being apprized of his removal returned in time to be with him at his death, he presented him a friendly note which he had written for him that morning, and said, 'Accept this, my dear sir, with my kind regards.' But he now appeared much exhausted; when his eldest son came in, who had been sent for immediately after his return, he took him by the hand, and said something to him which was not understood; he then placed his hand on his son's head, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, as if imploring a benediction upon him, but his speech was gone; yet though not heard on earth it was heard in heaven. When the clock struck five, he rallied a little, and asked 'what hour it was?' All was now solemn silence, the dying saint lay with his head reclining on his eldest daughter, Mrs. Hodson, who held him by his left hand; and on the right he was supported by Miss Hawker and his eldest son, who held his right hand. He appeared to be in a sound sleep; there was no appearance of dying visible in his countenance in the apprehension of his family, though his medical friend expected it; there were no clammy sweats of death, no convulsive throes, no distortion of features; his hands were as soft and comfortable

to the touch as when in health. About a quarter of an hour before he breathed his last, he withdrew his right hand from his son's, lifted it to his head, removed his nightcap, rubbed his ear a little, as if just awaking from a placid sleep. In this position, whilst his son held his right hand, and his daughter his left, and his head was reclining on Mrs. Hodson, he continued sleeping till a quarter past six, when without a sigh, without the least motion, yea, without the perception of those around him, he ceased to breathe—he literally fell asleep in Jesus. His medical friend, Mr. Dunning, an old and eminent practitioner, who was present, said he never witnessed such a death before!

> "Forth from the body, his late mansion here,
> The spirit imperceptibly withdrew;
> As when an angel leaves a prophet's cell,
> To him alone on special errand sent;
> Not e'en the unfolding of his wing was heard!"

So lived, so died, the venerable Robert Hawker! blessed in his life, blessed in his death, and blessed to all eternity. Thrice blessed saint of God, farewell! until all the members of the church of Christ, to whom thy ministry has been made a blessing, shall meet thee in glory, there together to praise God and the Lamb for electing, redeeming, and regenerating love and grace; all everlastingly glorified in and with our living head. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13.

So much beloved and respected was this man of God, that on the information of his death, the shops were half closed and remained so to the day of his burial; and the bells of the churches also continued to toll every day until his interment. He entered into rest on the *sixth* day of April, 1827, and his mortal remains were consigned to the silent tomb, on Good Friday, April the *thirteenth*, the burial day of his dear Lord

which was a day made often memorable in his life, and now no less memorable from his death; and on which had he lived he would have completed his *seventy-fourth* year. His day of burial was his day of birth. Ten clergymen attended at his funeral; and the usual service was read by his "fellow labourer in the ministry," the Rev. Septimus Courteney. Many thousands were present, and the scene was truly affecting, and the language of every one seemed to be—"Surely, there is a great man fallen in Israel!" Many funeral sermons were preached not only in the vicinity of his residence, but in several parts of the kingdom; some of which have been published. They all bear testimony to his superior natural endowments, to his high attainments in divine knowledge, and to the exemplary benevolence of his character—to the devotedness of his life, the spirituality of his mind, and to the warm affections of his heart, exemplified in his love to God and his love to man, demonstrating unto the world how much the power of grace rested upon him.

Though we might fill volumes in enlarging on the excellency of his character, nor in this enlargement exceed the bounds of truth and moderation; yet, in whatever his pre-eminence appeared, it was all of grace. It all originated in the love of God towards him, and the purpose of God concerning him before all worlds. The Lord purposed to make him all that he was made, and to work by him all that was wrought, and that too at the very period or era, and under the very circumstances and exigencies in which these things were effected. With what talents he should be endued, with what graces he should be blest, where he should exercise his ministry, and with what success he should be honoured, were all the results of unerring wisdom and almighty power! And when we contemplate him, as one raised up of God to detect and refute error; to elucidate and defend the truth; to edify, console, and feed the church

of Christ; the greatness of his talents, however brilliant; the eminency of his piety, however exalted; and the fruitfulness of his ministry, however extensive; are all lost sight of in the exceeding riches of the grace conferred upon him; and whilst we love the man with the warmest affections, and honour the minister with the profoundest veneration, we eulogize not the creature, as having modelled his own character, but "glorify God in him," Gal. i. 24.

Although in his doctrines he denied *progressive sanctification*, yet no man in his life, within the compass of my own knowledge, evidenced more the *progressive* fruits and effects, and sweet testimonies of that one sanctification, which was wrought in his heart, when made an habitation of God through the Spirit. Like the consecration of a temple, he considers it but one act, and all the subsequent advances therein, as but so many grateful evidences of its continuance. May both reader and writer, if it be the divine will, know as much as he knew of the sanctifying influences of the Holy One of Israel—he walked with God, he lived above the world, his conversation was in heaven.

He knew that faith was the *gift* of God; that Christ was exalted to *give* repentance unto Israel; that the love of God was *shed* abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; and therefore, when found in the exercise of these graces, or indeed of any other grace, he wrote it down among his privileges enjoyed, rather than among his duties discharged. Some divines, who have considered faith a duty rather than a privilege, have been sadly deficient in the exercise of this duty in the hour of extremity. The writer of this Memoir means no invidiousness in drawing a parallel between the death-bed scenes of the Rev. Thomas Scott, and the Rev. Robert Hawker; but to shew the different effects of their respective principles: both were eminent in their day; both ministers of Christ; both commentators on the holy scriptures; both set for the defence of the gospel; both had maintained

an upright honourable character; yet in their death how different! What is the cause of this?—The one was strong, and the other weak in faith. Mr. Scott is overwhelmed with trepidation, Dr. Hawker is ravished with delight; the one trembles to enter the flood, the other feels no fears. Mr. Scott in his life-time maintained, that faith was a *duty;* why not then exercise it, and in the discharge of this duty banish this overwhelming awe and distressing timidity? Dr. Hawker, on the other hand, receives it as a gift, and acknowledges it to be, even in the very exercise of it, a *privilege,* and wholly of God; but he enjoys the triumphs of faith over every fear of death, hell, or the grave. Surely the hand of the Lord is in this! This venerable man knew full well, that he should cordially love no duty, and discharge no duty with an eye to the glory of God, any further than the power of God rested upon him. We have seen him finish his course with joy—the Lord was with him!

The portion of St. Paul's Epistles, upon which he commented with his dying lips, whilst his family circle surrounded his bed, is indeed a sweet and interesting portion, well calculated, when faith is brought forth into exercise by the operation of the Spirit, to cheer the prospect of the dying saint, to fill his mind with confidence, and his heart with joy. May it be my happiness and also yours, my fellow traveller in the way of the kingdom, if such may cast his eye over these pages, when we arrive at the last stage, when our sun is going down below the horizon of things earthly, and verging towards eternity, to cast a farewell look on the way we have trodden, and in the retrospect of many mercies, to ascribe all "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us!" Of all the Bible, with which our departed friend was so well acquainted, he could not have

selected a portion more suitable, more consolatory, or more encouraging. Like a summer bee, weary on the wing, he pitches on this sweet flower buries himself as it were in the honied cell, and there falls asleep, till there shall arise upon the earth "a morning without clouds." Thus he died as he lived, in the full assurance of faith, and in the lively anticipation of eternal glory!

Reader, whoever thou art, pause over the pages of this brief Memorial—compare it with thine own—art thou made sensible of thine own insufficiency? And dost thou know what it is to live the life of faith upon the Son of God? Art thou an habitation of God through the Spirit? Through grace he kept up communion with God, and maintained an holy intimacy with heaven; through the same grace, and through grace only, canst thou be "a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

His body lies interred in the parish church of Charles, in the same vault with his wife and mother, about thirty feet from the south door in the aisle on the left hand; and a marble monument has been erected to his memory in the chancel of the said church. Over the tablet, which bears the following inscription, is a marble bust of the venerable author:—

A PUBLIC TRIBUTE OF
AFFECTION AND RESPECT
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.
SIX YEARS CURATE,
AND FORTY-THREE YEARS VICAR
OF THIS PARISH,
WHO DIED
THE SIXTH DAY OF APRIL, 1827,
AGED 74 YEARS.

Near his monument is a tablet, with this inscription, which bears testimony to the filial affection and liberal

disposition of his eldest daughter, who inherits, through the riches of divine grace, her father's best portion.

MEMORIAL—TO BRING TO REMEMBRANCE,
Psalm xxxviii. 70.

IN ORDER TO PERPETUATE THE LIVELY
REMEMBRANCE OF HER BELOVED FATHER,
ROBERT HAWKER,
AMONGST THE POOR OF THIS PARISH,
IN WHOSE WELFARE HE WAS EVER
DEEPLY INTERESTED,
MARY GRANVILLE HODSON
HAS INVESTED THE SUM OF £250 STOCK,
3 PER CENT REDUCED ANNUITIES,
IN THE NAMES OF TRUSTEES,
THE ANNUAL DIVIDENDS WHEREOF TO BE
PAID INTO THE HANDS OF THE VICAR OF THIS
PARISH, FOR THE TIME BEING, AND TO BE BY HIM
GIVEN AWAY IN BREAD TO THE POOR THEREOF,
ON THE 13TH DAY OF APRIL NEXT, AND ON THE
LIKE DAY IN EACH SUCCEEDING YEAR FOR EVER.
March 10, 1829.

On the other side is another tablet, on which is recorded her investment of a similar sum to memorialize her affection for her late husband, Thomas Hodson, Esq. the results of the dividends to be given away in the same manner, on the 12th of December, for ever.

The writer of the inscription on his monument has compressed his memorial in as few words as possible, perhaps from a conviction that all that could be placed on a marble monument could add nothing to the reputation of one, whose numerous works will carry down his name to the latest posterity. But that so little should be said of a man so distinguished for his christian virtues, his ministerial endowments, and numerous writings, has given offence to many. To the stranger casually visiting the church, or meditating there among the tombs, it gives no idea of the eminency of his character, or the usefulness of his labours, that they may

be induced to enquire after his writings, or to "glorify God in him." As some have wished to have a more enlarged testimony to be inscribed on his monument, the writer of this Memorial has ventured to draw up the outlines of such a record, if through the medium of a new tablet it be deemed sufficient to communicate some idea of his exalted worth.

May the Lord commission these Memorials of one of his faithful servants to the edification, comfort, and establishment of many of his chosen household, whilst sojourning in this wilderness, till all their conflicts are over, and the journey of life be ended. To the eternal Three in one be endless praise! Amen.

A PUBLIC TRIBUTE
OF AFFECTION AND RESPECT TO THE
MEMORY OF THE

REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D. D.

WHO FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY WAS
THE FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS MINISTER OF THIS PARISH,
SIX YEARS AS CURATE, AND FORTY-THREE YEARS AS VICAR.

THE ELEGANCY YET SIMPLICITY OF DICTION,
THE LIVELINESS AND BRILLIANCY OF IMAGINATION,
THE PERSPICUITY AND VIGOUR OF THOUGHT,
THE DEPTH AND COMPASS OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE,
WITH WHICH HE WAS TALENTED AND BLEST,
(THOUGH THE LIVING ELOQUENCE BE NOW SILENT)
ARE STILL EXTANT IN HIS
SERMONS ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST,
AND ON THE DIVINITY AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST,
IN HIS ZION'S PILGRIM,
AND OTHER NUMEROUS WORKS OF POLEMICAL, PRACTICAL,
AND EXPERIMENTAL DIVINITY;
BUT ABOVE ALL, IN
HIS POOR MAN'S COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE;
IN WHICH HE RICHLY DWELLS
ON GOD THE FATHER'S ELECTING LOVE,
ON GOD THE SON'S REDEEMING BLOOD,
AND GOD THE SPIRIT'S REGENERATING GRACE,
AS THE SOLE CAUSE
OF ALL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS
TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

HE ENTERED INTO REST, APRIL 6, 1827, AGED 74 YEARS.
"BEFORE HIS TRANSLATION,
HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY THAT HE PLEASED GOD."
Heb. xi. 5.

Here Zion's warrior brac'd his armour on,
Fought the good fight, and many a victory won.
But whence his prowess? whence his arm of might?
The Lord of hosts equipp'd him for the fight:
His was the shield of faith, the sword of flame;
From heaven's own armoury his weapons came.
His campaign ended—all his conflicts o'er—
He rests pavilion'd on the glory-shore:
In yonder vault his mortal harness lies,
Till th' archangel's trump shall bid him rise,
And gird it on anew—to triumph in the skies!

AN ELEGY

ON THE

DEATH OF THE REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH,

WHO DIED ON FRIDAY, THE SIXTH DAY OF APRIL, 1827.

"*The memory of the just is blessed.*"—Prov. x. 7.

BY JOHN KENT.

Forgive the muse, illiterate and obscure,
Who thus attempts in feeble verse to raise,
Tho' void of learning, yet with motive pure,
A monumental stone to HAWKER'S praise!

'Tis done! the conflict's o'er, the spirit fled,
Borne on seraphic pinions to the skies,
Where Jesu's face ten thousand glories shed,
And pleasures—everlasting pleasures rise.

Hawker is dead! that herald sent of God,
To make to man his great salvation known;
Let Zion's offspring weeping kiss the rod,
And gird their robes of deepest sackcloth on.

From coast to coast the doleful tidings spread!
Weep ye, who love the gates of Zion well;
Hawker's no more! he's numbered with the dead—
This day in Israel's host a champion fell.

Gone down to dust, yet his immortal fame
The sacred annals of the church shall shew,
And long record a Hawker's honour'd name,
Till day and night no more their course pursue.

Call'd up to celebrate with harps and songs,
The marriage-nuptials of the Lamb above;
Where hallelujahs from ten thousand tongues,
Shall swell the triumphs of redeeming love.

Dismiss'd to glory with a kiss of love,
He bade the lagging moments swifter roll;
Death was to him as harmless as a dove,
While floods of glory overwhelm'd his soul.

From Pisgah's top, by faith's celestial ray,
He did the land of pure delight explore;
The blissful regions of unclouded day,
Where sin ne'er enters, and where death's no more.

Not pluck'd, but gathered by the hand of love,
As tender fruit, or fragrant lilies are;
Transplanted to the paradise above,
To blossom in eternal glory there.

His setting sun shone with refulgent ray,
Grace! grace! in holy exstacy he cry'd;
The cov'nant ark thro' Jordan leads the way,
And lo! the gloomy waves of death divide.

Rais'd up by God, to vindicate his cause,
And wield aright the Spirit's two-edged sword;
Fearing no censure, seeking no applause,
His banner's motto was—"Thus saith the Lord!"

Against that rebel host, who dare the crown
Take from *His* head, who crush'd the host of hell;
Devoid of fear, he threw the gauntlet down,
And fought, like Michael, till the dragon fell.

Firm as a rock, while raging billows toss
Their foaming heads amidst the storm's career,
He took his post, beneath the bleeding cross,
And nobly did the blood-stain'd standard rear.

Blush ye, who from the pulpit or the press,
At him your arrows dipp'd in venom threw;
He lov'd the holy gospel, and no less
With holy Paul, the righteous precept too.

Go ye, nor with contaminated breath
Dare brand the saint with mental errors foul;
And witness bear, while in the arms of death,
How sweetly did his dying moments roll.

Yet one there was, who wrote for nobler end—
Who for the faith with him in meekness strove;
To truth and the Redeemer's interest friend,
Who, through the contest, nothing meant but love.

No more the hallow'd fane of Charles shall hear
Salvation flow from his melodious tongue;
Christ, in his glory, was exalted there,
While the vast area crowding thousands throng.

There did he preach to man's apostate race,
While in his breast divine affections glow,
The glories of Jehovah's sov'reign grace,
And awful glory of the fiery law.

Through Britain's isle, to climes beyond the west,
Such pastors, O thou God of Jacob send;
Who, with the spirit of Elijah blest,
Shall for the faith delivered thus contend!

Go, trace the prophet in his wond'rous flight,
Ye young Elishas, and his steps pursue,
To catch, while he ascends the world of light,
His falling mantle and his spirit too.

And thou, O Charles! amidst the general woe,
Shouldst mingle deep thy griefs with those that mourn;
O'er his dear ashes let thy sorrows flow,
With undissembled tears bedew his urn.

A thousand blessings did his hands bestow ;
He ne'er unpitied heard the orphan's cry,
But sought the haunts of wretchedness and woe,
To wipe the tear from sorrow's weeping eye.

Were there no heaven wherein the just shall dwell,
Such was his sympathetic love to man;
Or were the penal fires extinct in hell,
Still to do good would HAWKER'S feet have ran !

Witness his care of that unpitied race,
Abandon'd harlots—victims to their sin ;
How did his ardent zeal procure a place,
From error's path their roving feet to win !

In sure and certain hope, his flesh to dust
Commit, and ask—where is thy victory grave ?
To wait the resurrection morn august,
In which the upright shall dominion have.

Faithful to death, he now receives the crown,
And does the victor's palm in triumph wave ;
Is now with Jesus on his throne sat down :
Such honour shall the saints in glory have.

Farewell, farewell ! till round the throne we meet,
To sing with thee the never-ending song,
And cast our crowns at the Redeemer's feet,
While everlasting ages roll along.

PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1826.

THE *Spiritual* Reader, conversant in divine things, will need no information to shew him, for whom these Sermons, on the GODHEAD of Christ, were originally intended. He will perceive, that they were meant for such, as by regeneration had been brought into a capability, under divine teaching, of receiving "the things which are freely given to us of GOD," 1 Cor. ii. 12. But he will perceive also, that they were meant for such, as Paul calls, "Babes in CHRIST," to be fed "with milk, and not with meat," 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Hence he will observe also, that the subject begins, and is carried on through the whole volume, more in a way of inquiry, than decision: more with a view, that the Reader, matriculated in the school of CHRIST by the new birth, should form his *own* opinion, under divine teaching, than be led by the Writer's. And hence the question, with which the first sermon opens, is, in fact, carried on through every discourse that follows; and forms the conclusion for inquiry at the end—What think ye of CHRIST? And the design herefrom, is, as if personally addressed to every Reader; saying, You have now gone over some of the leading points of character, concerning the Almighty Author of salvation; the question from the whole now is, What think *you* of CHRIST?

Had these Sermons been originally designed for the higher taught classes, in the Church of CHRIST; the subject would have been treated, in a much greater extent, in the mysteries of the Gospel; and in the inquiry, concerning Him,

"whom to know is life eternal;" here it would have been prosecuted, under all its bearings. The glorious doctrine of the most holy Trinity would have been the basis (as it is in itself of all revelation) of these Sermons, and every view of our most glorious CHRIST would have been taken from this standard. Wherefore this was not then done, hath been assigned; and the motive, if wrong, must be its apology. But now, after a lapse of time, of *six and thirty years;* spared by the LORD to the present period; and called upon for a new edition of this work; in revising the whole, and to render the whole, under sovereign grace, more generally useful to the church at large; I have judged it right to begin, where GOD himself in his gracious revelations of himself to his church began; and take our *datum* in proof of the GODHEAD of CHRIST, from the doctrine of "the Holy Three which bear record in heaven: for these Three are One," 1 John v. 7. This foundation, spiritually and scripturally formed in the mind by an unction from the LORD, (1 John ii. 20,) will prepare the enlightened believer to a proper apprehension of his Almighty Person, who in his divine essence and nature is one of those Holy Three, constituting GODHEAD; and who, by the assumption of our nature, hath come forth to make a revelation of the purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure of JEHOVAH in his Trinity of Persons; and is the great medium of all communication, and the visible JEHOVAH to the church, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory.

Every part and portion of the word of GOD tends to proclaim the unity of the Divine Essence, in his Trinity of Persons. But as if, in greater condescension still, the LORD JEHOVAH not only proclaims this foundation truth; but proceeds to give full and repeated testimonies of the same. For while we hear JEHOVAH call himself "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," (Isaiah lvii. 15,) and by his servant the prophet, saith, "Hear, O Israel! the LORD our GOD is one LORD!" (Deut. vi. 4,) he no less teacheth the church, that his nature, and being, and essence,

differs from all the creatures he hath called into existence; for it is in a Trinity of Persons. Hence we find the sacred Three speaking *to* each other, and speaking *of* each other; and in a way, and manner, as decidedly define a distinction of Persons, while constituting One, and the same eternal essence of GODHEAD. I stay not to quote the many passages to this amount, in both Testaments of Scripture; for this would form a Treatise of itself, more than a Preface. But I refer you to some few in point: Ps. cx. 1; xlv. 6, 7; xl. 6; with Heb. x. 5. John's gospel in every part. Acts xiii. 1, 2, &c.

But what is very highly observable, and if the Reader hath not already been acquainted with it, and is a follower of CHRIST in the regeneration, he will find an high gratification from; is, that the conferences of the Holy Three in One with each other, as recorded in the Bible, are chiefly, if not altogether, concerning the church. This is a wonderful condescension in the High and Lofty One inhabiting eternity, and ought to be everlastingly uppermost in our hearts. It begins at the very first chapter of sacred Scripture, Gen. i. 26, where we find the sacred language: "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." Again, "Let us go down and there confound their language," Gen. xi. 7. And this (which is but little considered) was more in mercy than judgment: for it laid the foundation, for the miraculous gift of tongues, at the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 4. We have another beautiful illustration of this distinction of Persons in the GODHEAD, conversing about the church, in the several acts of grace towards the church, as related in the vision of Isaiah, sixth chapter, and explained Acts xxviii. 26.

But we must not stop here; for blessed be our GOD, in his Trinity of Persons, he hath not stopped here. Acts of unparalleled grace are unfolded, of this distinction of Persons in the GODHEAD, and as particularly made known to the church, in the several manifestations of love from each, and to every individual of CHRIST's mystical body. It is the FATHER, by

whom the whole family, the church, is named, in heaven and in earth, Ephes. iii. 14. His is the choice of their Persons; his, the adoption of them as children; his, the acceptation of them in CHRIST, Ephes. i. 4—6. It is GOD the SON, who hath espoused them to himself; taken their nature, and redeemed them from the Adam-fall transgression "by the sacrifice of himself," Isa. liv. 5. Hosea ii. 19. Heb. ii. 16, &c. It is GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath anointed them together with CHRIST; and by his own personal work, carries on the whole process in the renewal of our nature, from the fall, from grace to glory. Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. Now these, and the like views (and which the Reader will not fail, I hope, to observe, are all founded on scripture authority) will not only prepare the regenerated child of GOD, for receiving the testimonies selected in this volume of the GODHEAD of CHRIST: but, under a divine unction from the LORD, will tend to open the finer feelings of the soul, to the spiritual enjoyment of those distinct acts of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, and induce what is the highest proof of being a partaker of grace; namely, a corresponding affection of love, adoration, and praise to the united Author of such unspeakable mercies.

I am led to hope that the revision of this Work in this manner, for the present edition, will, under the LORD's blessing, tend to render it more useful. Even the more advanced believer in the church of GOD, by beginning with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, will find the advantage in contemplating the vast assemblage of Scripture proofs here brought into one view, of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. And our little children in the divine life, will be led to trace up the glorious subject, of CHRIST'S GODHEAD, to behold his oneness, in the unity of the divine essence, and Triuity of Persons; according to our LORD's own statement: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father also!" John xiv. 7. 9.

The Reader of the former editions will observe that I have

omitted in this all reference to Socinian writers. Indeed, I thought it *then*, but am more convinced *now*, it was labour lost. For while the Holy Scripture asserts, that "the natural man cannot receive the things of the SPIRIT of GOD," (1 Cor. ii. 14,) to what purpose appeal to them? Add to this weighty consideration, the writings of such men are ephemeral, and the sooner they are consigned to their just oblivion the better. But in the place of such quotations, I have endeavoured to raise up, here and there, through the body of the Work, spiritual reflections, which I hope the LORD will make profitable to Spiritual Readers.

I cannot close my Preface without pausing to observe, and in that observation, to adore, distinguishing grace, for preserving a life so marked with evil, (Ps. xxxvi. 1,) through a period of *six and thirty years;* and for enabling me to revise these early labours. "LORD! what am I! and what is my father's house?"—The GOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the FATHER of glory, give (if it be His blessed will) to every redeemed and regenerated Reader, that his grace may incline to the perusal of these Sermons, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe!" And through rich, free, full, sovereign grace, they may "be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of GOD!"

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
April 13, 1826.

THE

ORIGINAL PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION,

PUBLISHED IN 1790—1.

It may be expected that some reason should be assigned for publishing the following Sermons, upon a subject which hath already received so much discussion. And indeed, were the merits of the performance the only recommendation, it is more than probable the work itself would never have been brought forth to public view. But this, however, is the smallest consideration for its appearance.

The Sermons were composed for the particular edification of those persons in whose spiritual concerns the Author considers himself highly interested, and who are justly entitled to his best and most diligent labours. And his sole object was to prevent the minds of his congregation from being led away from what he humbly conceives to be the pure faith of the Gospel, by the revival of an opinion long since exploded, but which seems to be mingling with the fashionable doctrines of the present day.

As this purpose might have been sufficiently answered from the pulpit, the Author would have rested satisfied with the consciousness of having discharged by that means his duty, and with having given his public testimony, however trifling, to the important cause. But when he found the sincerity of the Established Clergy called in question; and it was confidently said, that but few of them believed the doctrines they professed, he concluded that he ought not to confine his sentiments within the narrow limits of his own parish, but declare himself in a more public way, to be one of those *supposed* few, whose profession and convictions are happily blended.

Although he hath said this, in order to account for the publication of the following Sermons, he has not said it with a view to deprecate the severity of criticism, or to affect popularity. To assert the dignity of our most glorious GOD and Saviour, the great founder of the Gospel, is the indispensable duty of every faithful servant of Jesus, whatever inconveniences he may suffer in so just a cause. And God forbid that any man who bears this character, should recede from any apprehension in speaking of *his* divinity upon *earth* through whom alone, in his incommunicable salvation, our everlasting happiness is secured *in heaven*. If he shrinks with fear from what may be the result of this publication, it is not from the dread of criticism (the shafts of which, upon the present occasion, must lose their power to wound,) but his fear is, lest the cause he wishes to support, should suffer from the very imperfect manner in which he hath treated it.

He hath only further to request, that the candid reader will make all proper allowances for the great length into which he has been unavoidably carried, in the induction of particulars, towards the accomplishment of the end intended. Did he write for the amusement of a light hour, he could not hope, that a subject in which there is so little variety, and such great sameness of argument, would procure many readers. But as the design is of a different nature, he trusts the infinite importance of it will be a sufficient apology with those who read from better motives.

While he writes, his eyes are to the LORD that a divine blessing may attend the serious perusal; and if these Discourses be found to contain any thing of a salutary tendency, either to confirm the faith of the believer, or to guide the uninformed in his pursuit of truth; that GOD "in all things be glorified, through Jesus Christ."

SERMON I.

MATTHEW XXII. 42.

What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?

THE religion of Jesus which we profess, demands our attention by every argument capable of interesting the human heart. The manner of its first introduction, the immense preparation which, through so many ages, preceded its establishment, its descent to us, sealed with the blood of apostles and martyrs, nay, even "God himself confirming the word with signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," (Heb. ii. 4.) are circumstances so very striking, as seem to render it impossible for any man to suppose, that all this mighty apparatus was intended to refer to a matter, trifling in its nature, and of no material consequence whether neglected or despised. "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," (Heb. xii. 25.)

But while we feel the full influence, and great importance of the gospel, we cannot but be proportionably anxious to know the truth as it is in Jesus: that we may embrace "that faith," and *that faith only*, "which was once delivered unto the saints," (Jude 3.) For, however pure the fountain from whence the word of God first issued, yet if it comes to us through tainted and corrupt channels, how shall we be assured that it hath not imbibed a portion of impurity?

It is a well-known truth, and cannot be dissembled, that, from the very infancy of Christianity, errors crept

into the church. The tares of infidelity and scepticism were early sown with the good seed. They sprung up and appeared together, and both (as our blessed Lord himself predicted) "will grow together unto the harvest," (Matt. xiii. 30.) But let not the faithful despond on this account. Tares are always to be discerned from good seed. The LORD in his providence hath a gracious design in every dispensation. "There must be heresies among you," (saith an apostle) "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," (1 Cor. xi. 19.) Even the errors of opinion, therefore, are not without their use in the present state of discipline, for they serve to ascertain and prove the truth. And from this ordeal the gospel hath been always found to come forth, not only with more clearness, but also bringing with it increasing evidence of its divine authority.

Every age hath been distinguished by some peculiar mode of hostility against the principles of our holy faith. By open attack, and by insidious design, the false friend and the professed foe have alike aimed their blows, to effect the ruin of the church. But we know who it is that hath said, his "church is founded on a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail," (Matt. xvi. 18.) The enemies, who have come forward against Christianity, have only broken their arrows against its impenetrable shield, and, tired of the unequal combat, have withdrawn from the field in sullen silence.

It would, however, be in vain to expect that all opposition should cease. The LORD the SPIRIT permits the existence of error, with a view to accomplish some greater good. By this means the truth, when discovered, is placed on a more firm and sure foundation, and in the mean time it answers the necessary ends of trial to exercise the faith of the true believer.

Besides, while the corrupt passions of the human mind remain unreformed, there will be always some, who will find an interest in opposing the pure system of morality contained in the gospel, and while religion is sought for by others, "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after Christ," (Coloss. ii. 8), the pride of reason will not easily bend to the humbleness and docility of little children, which is so necessary to the reception of those doctrines by which the Christian faith is peculiarly known. From both these causes, therefore, the religion of Jesus will be always sure to meet with opposition.

The controversy of the present hour seems to be particularly of this latter kind. Under the specious pretence that reason alone is competent to determine the measure of religious faith, a certain class of men (and in the garb of friends to Christianity too) have presumed to analyze the several parts of revelation by this standard, and have peremptorily rejected every thing beyond the power of reason to account for, as impossible to have proceeded from God. Thus, with a rash and bold hand, they have torn from the gospel all the sacred mysteries of our holy faith, reduced the whole to a mere system of ethics, and degraded the divine Author of our salvation to a character no higher than that of a moral teacher—the equal of Socrates or Confucius. Nay, to such an height hath this doctrine advanced, that he who hath the dangerous honour of pre-eminence in this opinion hath declared, that the sentiments even of an apostle are invalid, and of no weight with him.*

When errors of this fatal tendency spring up in the world, and come forth to the public under the sanction of distinguished names, we cannot be too much upon our guard, to repel the seducing influence. The GODHEAD of CHRIST is the chief corner-stone in the edifice

* Dr. Priestley.

of Christianity. Remove this from the building and the whole fabric immediately totters. The foundation is shaken to the very centre. There appears at once an evident disproportion between the end and the means; the importance of the object proposed, and the person by whom it was accomplished. And then the great doctrine of atonement falls to the ground, and all the rich promises of the gospel are done away.

In matters of less moment, though we cannot but lament that there should be any dissensions amongst sincere professors of Christianity, yet when these refer to points of mere form or ceremony, and concern not the fundamentals of religion, it were a folly to contend. They arise from the weaknesses and prejudices of human nature, and are the result of that imperfection and frailty, which mark our very best performances. But when so vital a part of the gospel is attacked; the divinity of our blessed Lord palpably denied; himself classed among fallible men; all adoration to him expressly forbidden; and the members of the established church branded with idolatry: it is impossible to regard such reproaches with indifference. How can any true believer hear, with unconcern, that blessed Person, by whose sacred name we are called, thus degraded and traduced? Surely it must be a duty to come forward, and with becoming confidence assert the dignity of that GOD under whose banner we serve, and the purity of that form of worship which we profess! Against assaults of this nature it can be no bigotry to remonstrate; nor will the just defence of our principles be deemed, by any liberal mind, an ill-timed zeal. Nay, our silence might rather be construed into a tacit acknowledgment that we thought the charge unanswerable, and therefore meanly took refuge under an establishment which we were unable to defend.

But though gratitude, duty, and all the important

interests of religion, demand this from us, and to remain supine and indifferent would be unpardonably criminal, yet, in opposing the *opinions*, we never oppose the *persons* of men. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) In the investigation of truth, every sincere friend to the gospel must wish, that all inquiries may be pursued, not only with Christian temper and candour, but with somewhat more than these, with affection and goodwill. It is not for the triumph of opinion we contend, but for truth. Our most earnest desires are, that "all may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved," (1 Tim. ii. 4.) While anxious therefore, in the pursuit of this great point, we condemn no man for his religious principles. "To his own master he standeth or falleth," (Rom. xiv. 4.) Too conscious of our own manifold imperfections, we dare not be rigorous and unmerciful to the imperfections of others. And surrounded as we are with so much darkness in the present state of being, that we can hardly judge of the objects which are near us with any precision or certainty, we are well aware how little the wisest of us know of the nature and dispensations of God. It were to be wished that all parties and persuasions of Christians would duly consider this circumstance, that every one might "learn to think humbly of himself, and as he ought to think." But what a comfortable and encouraging relief to the mind is that gracious promise of scripture; that if we are brought under the blessed direction of the great Spirit of truth, "he will guide us into all truth," (John xiv. 13.) "If we trust in the Lord, and lean not upon our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge him, he will direct our paths," (Prov. iii. 5, 6.) For "the secret of

the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant," (Ps. xxv. 13.)

With these objects in view, and under an humble hope of divine assistance, it is my intention, in this and a few following discourses, to examine the evidences of our Lord's divinity. The question is exceedingly interesting, and the event important. For if it can be proved that the testimony of scripture is against this doctrine; it will follow, that the faith we profess, and the form of worship we observe, are founded on wrong principles; and all the venerable sanction of names, or the zeal of godly reformers, will be utterly insufficient to justify our continuance in them. But should it appear from the strictest investigation, that this great article of our church arises immediately from the scriptures themselves, and derives its influence wholly from this supreme authority; we have only to pity and pray for the conversion of those who differ from us. Their objections, instead of injuring our cause, will have proved beneficial to it, by enabling us to shew that "our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 5.)

In the prosecution of this design, it will be my duty to bring before you the evidences we are in possession of, to prove the GODHEAD of CHRIST. It will be yours to examine the same with carefulness and impartiality. And as our salvation is blended together, and rests upon the same common cause, you will give credit at least to my integrity, if not to my understanding. I should be utterly unworthy the sacred office I hold among you, were I capable of temporizing upon so awful a concern. I scruple not therefore to say, I have received myself the belief of this great doctrine with the fullest conviction. It is the faith in which I trust, under the divine grace, always to live, and in which

I hope to die. But, while anxious to discharge what appears to be only my duty, in placing this great principle of the gospel before you, upon its proper basis, I desire no one implicitly to follow my opinion. Upon so momentous a concern, every man, as far as he is able, should judge for himself. Like the Bereans, who are mentioned in sacred history with such honourable testimony, I would wish you to "search the scriptures daily whether these things are so," (Acts xvii. 11.) Happy is that Christian whose experience in divine truths confirms the doctrines there revealed! Who (as the apostle says) from "believing on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," (1 John v. 10.) If religion be at all important, it must be highly important; indifference is unpardonable; inattention somewhat worse than folly. It is certainly the duty of every individual to be able to satisfy his own mind at least, if not to give an answer to others, of the hope that is in him: and that man must be strangely lost to all the great objects of eternity, who can sit down regardless in a matter of such infinite consequence, and which so highly concerns the salvation of his soul. Bend with me, I beseech you, before the awful throne of God, and let us humbly implore assistance from above, that the attention to this solemn subject, both of Him who speaks and those who hear, may be rewarded with his grace. That "God may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of our calling, (Ephes. i. 18, 19,) that we may approve things that are excellent, and that we may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ," (Phil. i. 10.)

And here, before I open the evidences in support of our blessed Lord's divinity, I beg once for all to premise, that I shall draw no conclusions in favour of this doctrine but from Scripture; for on all disputable points in reli-

gion, this certainly is the only unerring standard of our judgment. I am free to confess that the whole body of commentators are nothing decisive with me on this important point. Whoever implicitly follows the opinions of men may be deceived. From the pure and uncorrupt word of God, there can be no danger of error or delusion. It is to this authority only I bend: and I trust you will find nothing in the course of these sermons insisted upon with the smallest emphasis, but what can clearly be proved from the testimony of Scripture.*

It will be unnecessary to produce any evidence of the authenticity of the sacred books themselves. The hardiest champions of infidelity have never yet been able to disprove the marks of genuine truth and purity with which these records are transmitted to us. Were these discourses, indeed, levelled against the controversial writings of deists, it might be needful to take a larger circuit, and

* I take occasion thus early in the prosecution of the work to observe to the Reader, that in this Edition, I have totally omitted speaking of the gracious acts of JEHOVAH, in his Trinity of Persons towards his people, as was injudiciously done in the former Editions under the term of *Office*. I know it is much used by many well taught souls of the LORD'S people: and I fell into the same error. But, according to my present views, I consider the term highly unsuitable and degrading: yea, somewhat worse than both. JEHOVAH hath indeed, in his Trinity of Persons, graciously condescended, to guarantee to his Church in CHRIST, an assurance, that each glorious Person in the GODHEAD, in the economy and covenant of grace, will fulfil all "the good pleasure of his will," and confirm all his promises in CHRIST. But while GOD our FATHER hath engaged in all these blissful things as our FATHER, shall we call this fatherly love an *office?* Is that unparalleled instance of love in One of the Persons taking into union with him our nature, an *office?* And all the rich comforts and consolations of the Holy Ghost, so many *offices?* We do not do so in the common charities and relations of life. My father in nature is not my father in *office*, but in *reality*: and by that tie we are brought into a very sweet and endearing relationship. How infinitely more in those spiritual and eternal connections into which the Church is brought by our adoption as children in CHRIST! John would not have called such acts of grace, acts of *office*, when, under the impression of that love, which passeth knowledge, he cried out: "Behold! what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of GOD!" (1 John iii. 1.)

to shew the authority on which they rest. But as my present design is of another nature, and intended only to prevent your minds from being led away by an opinion injurious to Christianity, and advanced by Christians themselves, who acknowledge with us the writings of the New Testament to be genuine, it is not necessary, upon his occasion, to bring forward any evidence in their upport. Taking it for granted, therefore, that the sacred olume is admitted to be authentic, I shall immediately roceed to bring before you that great body of evidence with which the Scriptures abound, to prove the deity of the Son of God, and that Jesus is, in the fullest sense of the expression, "one with the Father—over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

The words of the text which I have thought to be most pertinent to the purpose of opening the subject on the divinity of Christ, are not a little demonstrative of the great point in question.

Our blessed Lord had been interrogated by the Pharisees and Sadducees, (and it should seem not with the most friendly design,) upon certain matters of opinion peculiar to each sect. After this conference, Jesus himself proposed to them the question in the text: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David: he saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord; saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Let any man of plain common understanding read this passage as it stands in the New Testament, and then determine for himself; will it not instantly strike him, that our blessed Lord meant to infer, that somewhat above the nature of an human being was appointed to distinguish the character of the Messiah? That, notwithstanding Christ, according to the flesh, was to spring from the seed of David,

yet, at the same time, by his superior nature, he was to be David's Lord. That our Saviour's argument was considered in this light by his hearers, and that it wrought a conviction of this kind upon their minds, seems highly probable; for the Evangelist adds, "They were not able to answer him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions."

But passing by this argument in favour of our cause, I lay no stress upon it. It is the question only in the text which I wish to make use of as the basis of this discourse: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" Is he, according to the opinion of our modern Socinians, simply no other than a man; or, agreeable to the doctrine of the Scriptures, is he the Son of God? This is the great and interesting question to be discussed in the prosecution of this subject. And my sincere prayers to God are, that void of all party persuasion, and unbiassed by the smallest prejudice, our researches may be directed by the influence of that blessed Spirit of truth, "which will guide us into all truth."

To a mind perfectly free from prepossession, and open to conviction, the numberless passages we meet with in Scripture, which fully and unequivocally declare Christ to be the Son of God, might, one would think, decidedly prove his Godhead. For such a distinguished and peculiar appellation cannot, with the smallest shadow of reason, be applied to him, unless his pretensions to the relationship it includes be also admitted.

Some, however, who have considered our blessed Lord in a higher degree of dignity than any prophet or messenger of God who preceded him; have yet conceived that nothing valid to the argument can be derived from this phrase of "Son of God," with which Christ is every where distinguished in the sacred writings. And, among other reasons, they have assigned that this title is sometimes given also in Scripture to

angels, to magistrates,* and even good Christians.† It is wonderful that men of the most penetrating abilities should not immediately perceive the very dissimilar circumstances under which this appellation is used when applied to men, and when spoken of him who is not only said to be "the Son of God;" but declared to be the Son of God "with power;" and also "the express image of his person," (Rom. i. 4; Heb. i. 3.) They who are so ready to class our Lord's pretensions to this title with those of the general mass of eminent persons to whom it is sometimes given, would be at a loss, I believe, to explain, upon the same principles, in what sense we are to understand the term when it is connected with the most expressive phrases; such as, "the only begotten Son of God, who was in the bosom of the Father:" the "beloved Son of God," and "dear Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," (John i. 14—18; Matthew iii. 17; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35; Colossians i. 13—15.) There must be something surely peculiar in those instances, and different from the common acceptation of the phrase when conferred by way of eminence on particular persons or characters. But, added to these striking particularities, there are other corroborating circumstances, which put the matter beyond all doubt, and which I shall much wonder if the most extravagant latitude of construction can possibly do away.

If I can prove to your satisfaction that this distinguished title, by which Christ is every where, in the New Testament, called the Son of God, was not applied to him merely by his followers, but was the

* In the book of Psalms, lxxxii. 6. "I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most High."

† "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. And again, the apostle John says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. Now are we the sons of God," 1 John iii. 2.

individual character by which his commission and authority were to be made known; that it was first declared by the angel in his address to Mary at the annunciation; afterwards assumed by our Lord himself, at his entrance upon his public character; received the testimony of a voice from heaven, in confirmation of its truth, more than once, during our Lord's exercise of his ministry; and that even the spirits of darkness gave the same evidence to it: in short, that this title uniformly characterized his person while he continued upon earth, and is the distinguishing name by which the apostles and inspired writers have revealed his doctrines to all ages of the church; and that these facts do not depend upon a single passage of a questionable sense or meaning, but that one invariable strain of testimony runs through the whole volume of Scripture. If, I say, I can shew this, I should hope it would be conclusive and satisfactory to every candid person. Permit me, therefore, to bring before you the several testimonies of this kind by which this leading proof of Christ's divinity is confirmed and assured.

The first instance is that of the angel, in his salutation of Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: THEREFORE that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," (Luke i. 35.) Now here is an express and positive reason assigned why Jesus is called the Son of God: from the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her: by which our blessed Lord, deriving his existence in the flesh from a Divine Power, and without the intervention of an human father, he was truly and properly called the Son of God. A circumstance evidently peculiar to Christ, and by which the title becomes applicable only to him. Had the conception not been miraculous, but the natural consequence

of Mary's marriage with her husband, there could have been no reason given for this appellation. There is something also very remarkable in the angel's expression: he does not say, in consequence of this overshadowing power of the Highest, "the child" shall be called the Son of God, but (το αγιον) "that holy thing;" thereby drawing a striking distinction between the word made flesh, and the highest created being whatever.

The second proof I shall bring of Christ's exclusive claim to this title, personally considered, is the testimony of a voice from heaven, both at his baptism, and again at his transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matthew iii. 17. xviii. 5, &c.; Luke ix. 35; Mark ix.) This, also, I conceive to be another very striking discrimination between the ordinary custom observable among men, whereby eminent persons may be distinguished by eminent titles; and the authority of a voice from heaven, giving so extraordinary a demonstration of the dignity of him to whom it was applied. If it can be any where shewn, and in any one instance, that any individual among the sons of men ever received such a testimony from above, then this of Jesus at his baptism and transfiguration will by so much be lessened upon a comparison in its importance: but if not, and it be clearly proved that CHRIST and CHRIST only was so distinguished, it plainly follows, that there must have been something peculiar in *his* person and character, from his receiving such supernatural attestations of his dignity and consequence. For we may venture to ask, in the words of the apostle, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Hebrews i. 5.)

But, thirdly, we have other testimony beside that of the angel, and a voice from above, for the spirits of darkness brought their unwilling evidence to the same

great truth. Read only the latter part of the fourth chapter of the gospel by St. Luke, and then determine on what ground it is that Christ is called the Son of God. "And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and he cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ," (Luke vi. 41; Mark v.) What overpowering evidences are these collectively considered, that the appellation of this title given to Christ is peculiar and appropriate! How any man can possibly withhold his assent to the GODHEAD of Jesus, when even apostate spirits cannot refrain, is unaccountable and surprising.*

When we add to these strong testimonies the further evidence, that our blessed Lord assumed this title himself, and founded his mission expressly upon it, because he was the Son of God; this at once determines the whole, by clearly shewing that it is on his own declarations we are authorized to apply the sacred appellation to him; and

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* It is an awful consideration, and may well merit the serious reflection of a retired hour, by way of humiliation to the pride of the human understanding; that the fall of man hath induced an effect of ignorance in the faculties, which "the angels that kept not their first estate" have not experienced, to their intellectual apprehension, in consequence of their apostacy. They, though fallen, know Christ, and readily confess his divinity and power. But man, with all his boasted knowledge, by nature, knows him not, neither can be brought, by all the efforts of mere reason only, to a clear apprehension of his person and character. While the "devils believe and tremble," we are solemnly assured by One who could not be mistaken, that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. ii. 27.

from hence we have reason also to infer, that the expression carries with it all the idea that we can entertain of a divine and eternal nature. It would be tedious to particularize every instance we meet with in the history of our blessed Lord of this kind. Let a few passages suffice.

Christ had healed a cripple on the Sabbath-day; for which the Jews sought to slay him; but Jesus answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because "he not only had broken the Sabbath, but had said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," (John v. 17, 18.) A most positive proof this, that our blessed Lord assumed this title, and that the Jews understood it in the light of a claim and of equality with the Father, for which they were so exceedingly exasperated against him.

Sometime after this, in a conference which Christ held with the Jews, in which he declared his unity with the Father, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones again to stone him; but Jesus demanded the cause for which they did it; they replied, "for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God," (John x. 30, 33.) Can any thing be more in point than this?

Again, upon a similar occasion, when Christ had opened the eyes of one that was born blind, and much altercation and dispute arose between the Jews and the man in consequence of it, which terminated in putting him out of the synagogue, our blessed Lord met his patient, and proposed to him this very question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him," (John ix. 35—38.) Here is

an evidence the most express, plain, and positive that can be, and attended also with the divine adoration of Jesus. Would Christ have assumed this title, and accepted homage and worship by virtue of it, had not both been his just right? Would not this meek and humble Saviour rather have corrected the errors of the man, and availed himself of so good an opportunity of renouncing such a title, and enjoining the worship of God only, had not his divinity been unquestionable, and his relationship to the Father fully clear and indisputable? Judge then on what dangerous ground those men tread, who step forward with so much confidence to rob the Son of God of his due, and endeavour to degrade the eternal Son of the Father to the condition of a poor being like ourselves! What a different opinion the apostle Peter had of his Master's real character, and what sentiments he entertained of our Lord's claim to this title, may easily be gathered from the expressions he made use of in his way to Cæsarea Philippi. When Christ, in order to try their faith in him, proposed to his disciples this question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets." And when Christ desired to know what they thought of him, Peter, with his usual promptness, immediately cried out, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Can any man suppose that this was said in compliment only? That Peter would say to a man like himself, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God? Is it possible any one can adopt such an opinion? and especially when it procured for him that glorious commendation, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," (Matt. xvi. 13.) So far indeed was this from being a common compliment, used in courtesy to distinguished men, that Christ de-

clared it to be a truth of that superlative nature, that human discernment was unequal to the discovery of it, and it could only be revealed by God the Father. The same divine truth, it may justly be said, operates in the present hour. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

I shall mention only one passage more, in confirmation of our Lord's assumption of this title; and that is the instance at his trial, when the high-priest demanded of Jesus, by a solemn adjuration, to tell him, "whether he were the Christ the Son of God," (Luke xxii. 70,) or as the equivalent phrase of another Evangelist expresses it, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark xiv. 61.) And on our Lord's declaring that he was, the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, he had spoken blasphemy. Would he have pronounced this blasphemy, if it had been considered as nothing more than a usual complimentary title given to remarkable characters *ex officio?* Much less would he have declared Jesus deserving of death in consequence of it? Is it not self-evident, that the Jews considered the expression in the full sense and acceptation of the word; and which, of consequence, became blasphemy, if improperly assumed? And is it not equally clear that Christ laid down his life in support of his just pretensions to this title?

Such repeated proofs of the point in question, leave no room to doubt in what sense we are to consider Christ's assumption of this character, and what ideas we are to annex to this distinguished appellation. It must be plain to every candid and unprejudiced mind, that the term made use of, when applied to the person of Jesus, differs most essentially when used in compliment to any other among the sons of men. And if we have

authority to draw any inference from any one fact in the world, we may with the fullest safety conclude, from those instances, that our blessed Lord is, in the highest and most complete sense of the word, "the Son of God." Here the reasoning of the apostle is strictly applicable; "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son," (John i. 5—9.

It were unnecessary for me to go further, and enumerate the several passages we meet with in Scripture, in which Christ is particularly distinguished by this title among his apostles and followers. After the review already taken, and especially our Lord's own testimony on this point, it would, I think, be superfluous.* Even

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* Though it were needless to multiply quotations, in support of the doctrine before us, yet, as some of the expressions with which Christ is particularized, under the character of "Son of God," are singularly striking, it may not be amiss to mention a few of them in a note. The apostle Paul, when speaking of Christ, says, that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power," Rom. i. 4. Had Christ's resurrection been solely the effect of the Father, or the Holy Ghost's operation, the resurrection of Christ in this sense would not have declared him to be the Son of God with power, no more than the resurrection of others. But when it is said, as in this Scripture, that he was declared to be the Son of God with power "by his resurrection from the dead;" this act of His proved his eternal power and Godhead. And the apostle plainly testified by this expression, what the apostle's sentiments were, that this appellation was not with Christ a barren title, but accompanied with that plenitude of authority which the relationship might be supposed to include; differing most essentially in every point when applied to any mere human character, and when spoken of Him who came in all the power of the Highest.

The testimony of Nathaniel is to the same amount also; for it was given upon our Lord's displaying proofs of his divine omniscience "Rabbi, (says he) thou art the Son of God," John i. 49.

The apostle Peter, upon a remarkable occasion, hath given us his repeated ideas of this title; "Lord, to whom shall we go? (says he) thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," John vi. 69.

Martha, in making profession of her faith, used these memorable words, "I believe (says she) that thou art the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the world," John xi. 27.

what hath been now advanced on this subject, I would wish to be considered only as collateral to the main body of evidence which I purpose to bring forward in discussing the important question of our Lord's divinity.

I cannot but think the several circumstances I have laid before you, respecting the phrase itself, when applied to our Saviour, are very striking and particular; but they are not so essential to our cause, as to oblige us to lay the greatest stress upon them. The argument arising from hence, and much more, I think we might

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And the apostle John, in the conclusion of his gospel, tells us, that the works and miracles of Christ which he hath recorded, were written on purpose "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name," John xx. 31. All which demonstrate most fully, that when Jesus is called the "Son of God," it is in a very different sense from the meaning when applied to any other character. Philip the Deacon, it is evident, considered it to be so when his Æthiopian convert made profession of his belief as a qualificatiou for baptism: "I believe (says he) that Jesus is the Son of God," Acts viii. 37. If this implied no more than a mere complimentary form, he might as well have professed his belief in any other remarkable character of Scripture.—And that the name of "Son of God," given to Christ upon all these occasions, is not merely titular, is abundantly strengthened in the proof by the divine attributes annexed to his character. When we behold these essential properties of divinity; omnipotency, omniscieney, and the like, ascribed to Jesus (as hereafter will be shewn,) it is not all the art of man that can apply these to any thing official.

From these and other passages of the like nature, which might, if needful, have been brought into the argument, nothing, I think, can be more plain, than that the apostles, and first followers of Christianity, considered our Lord, in the fullest sense, the real and proper Son of God. And I must confess it is with astonishment, that I behold men, who acknowledge the divine authority of Christ's mission, and yet disallow, at the same time, his claim to a divine character, which he evidently assumed. For surely it was incompatible with the pure and humble spirit of Jesus, to have taken, or even permitted, such a title to have been applied to him, if all the while he was conscious he had no right or claim to it. Such notions would never have been cherished in his holy breast. But what an awful passage is that of the apostle John, to those who reject, *in toto*, all the evidences with which this truth is supported! "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son," John i. 5—10.

with safety give up, and yet retain enough to prove the doctrine I am anxious to confirm in your minds.

The Godhead of Jesus is so conspicuous a feature in the gospel, and is supported by evidences which press upon us so closely on every side, that, I am sure, there is not any one point of Christ's religion more capable of being clearly proved and ascertained, than his claim to a divine nature.

I should proceed immediately to the testimonies contained in Scripture of this great doctrine, but their importance demands a more full and particular discussion than your present attention will permit. I reserve them, therefore, for the subject of our next meeting. In the mean time, consider what hath been said, and may the Lord give you a right understanding in all things.

SERMON II.

JOHN XVII. 5.

The glory which I had with thee before the world was.

THE prominent features which discriminated the life of Jesus, when upon earth, from all other characters which have at any time appeared upon the stage of this world, will be placed in the most advantageous point of view, if we previously examine the evidences we have of his pre-existent state and dignity. These, no doubt, are the great *criteria* of his divinity, and can alone enable us to comprehend many of the august events which followed in his life. My chief object in the present sermon, therefore, will be to collect such accounts as we have of this doctrine in Scripture, and bring them before you, together with the evidences of our Lord's character, as described by the sacred writers; which will tend, I hope, greatly to ascertain, and prove beyond all doubt, his right to a divine nature.

It would swell the subject to an unusual length, and much exceed the limits allotted to addresses of this kind, were I to instance every passage in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, which refers to this important point. I shall content myself, therefore, with selecting such only as are more immediately pertinent to my purpose, and of the plainest and most obvious meaning.

Happy indeed is it for mankind, that many of them are self-evident, and require no explanation. The word of God, which is intended for common use, is adapted to common apprehension. And though it is written with

all the marks of the most consummate wisdom, yet it wonderfully condescends, at the same time, to the humblest capacities, particularly in the great and essential points of knowledge, in which there is nothing but what the most uninformed mind through grace is capable of receiving. Divine goodness in this, as well as many other instances, plainly shewing, that however these things may be hid from the wise and prudent, yet hath he revealed them unto babes.* "God hath chosen

* Matthew xi 25. I have often thought, what an awakening consideration ariseth out of the doctrine contained in these words of Jesus: that sacred truths are "hidden from the wise and prudent," while they are "revealed unto babes." And when from the written word, we look into the world, for the evidences of the fact, and find such a wonderful correspondence between them; when we see men of the first abilities in *human* learning, the merest novices in *divine* things; while among the illiterate and uneducated, in the humbler walks of life, we as frequently discover a proficiency, and even depth of knowledge, in that science, which maketh "wise unto salvation:" the mind is awfully impressed in the review, and cannot help being led, almost instinctively as it were, to confess that there must be some more than ordinary cause operating to such events. Whatever the predisposing means are, the fact itself is undeniable; the peculiar and distinguishing truths of the gospel, are hidden from the wise and prudent, though revealed unto babes. As the matter is not altogether irrelevant to the interesting subject we are upon, it will not be considered, I should hope, an unpardonable digression, if I offer an observation in this way upon it. I should not have thought it proper to have interrupted the progress of the subject itself, by introducing it in the body of the Sermon; but in a note it is not, I conceive, so liable to objection.

By the fall of man, there is in every son and daughter of Adam, not only a total disinclination to the study of divine things; but a total inability, until restored by sovereign grace to a new and spiritual life in CHRIST, to the apprehension of them. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Observe, it is said, he *cannot* know them; because, being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, until regenerated, and spiritual life given unto him in CHRIST, he hath no spiritual faculties by which he might receive spiritual things. He is as incapable of spiritual food, as a dead man of animal sustenance. Hence, the solemn words of CHRIST, "Ye must be born again," John iii. 7. Until this Almighty act is wrought, the sinner, though he hears with the bodily ear, the great truths of GOD, neither can discern them, nor receive them. Hence, no less than *seven*

the foolish things of the world (saith an apostle) to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty," (Cor. i. 27.)

Nothing can more strikingly prove this, than the several passages of Scripture which have a reference to our present argument. For example, we see the most positive and express declaration of Christ's pre-existence and dignity in the words of the text. For when our blessed Lord says, "he had glory with the Father before the world was," what possible conclusion can any man make of this, but that Christ had existence in glory with the Father before the world? No sophistry or evasion can do away the very evident sense of the phrase. It is likely many different opinions may arise in the minds of different persons concerning the nature and degree of the glory here spoken of; and men fond of disputation and argument may spend much time in conjectures upon it: but if the words of Christ himself can be supposed to have any sense or meaning, his pre-existence and connexion with the Father must be admitted. "He had glory with the Father before the world was."* Nor could so plain a passage of Scrip-

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times in scripture, the HOLY GHOST hath recorded those awful words: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." Isaiah vi. 9; Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26; Romans xi. 9.

* I detain the reader for a moment to ponder these sublime words. They were spoken by the LORD JESUS, and spoken to the FATHER. And there are these two most blessed but most mysterious things folded up in them, which baffle all our intellectual faculties to explain; namely, "He had glory with the FATHER before the world." And, 2dly, He saith, "And now, O FATHER, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," (John xvii. 5.) Now here are several striking particulars. First, His own *essential* glory which he had in common with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST. 2dly, He desires that he might be glorified by the FATHER "with his own self:" and this is evidently as GOD and Man Mediator; for the *essential* glory of GODHEAD was, and is, his own, and never to be asked for, nor given. And, 3dly, here is implied a some-

ture ever have been thought ambiguous, were it not that, passing by the first and most obvious meaning, men suffer themselves to be led away in quest of something more mysterious than the plain sense naturally suggests.

So again, when our blessed Lord, upon various occasions, expressed himself on this subject, and without a figure, in words like these; "I came down from heaven," (John vi. 38.) "I proceeded forth, and came from God," (John viii. 42.) "Before Abraham was, I am,"* (John viii. 58.) "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven," (John iii. 13.) And in a conference with the Jews, he contrasted his nature and character with theirs, in language liable to no misconception; "Ye are from beneath, I am from above. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world," (John viii. 23.) "What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" (John viii. 62.) What construction can any one possibly put upon these very plain phrases, that shall deprive them of their evident sense and meaning, "that Christ came down from heaven," and that "he proceeded, and came forth from God."

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what of glory as Mediator, even glorified by the FATHER "with his own self:" which as it was before the world, so will it be, when there is no world; and to which none of the members of his mystical body can attain. And this is again expressed by the LORD, John vi. 46; "Not that any man hath seen the FATHER, save he which is of GOD, he hath seen the FATHER!" Hence it follows, that that holy portion of our nature, by being taken into union with one of the Persons in the GODHEAD, possesseth all divine faculties, so as to see JEHOVAH in his Trinity of Persons, who is himself invisible to all his creatures. What a view doth this one scripture give of the infinite greatness of our GOD and Saviour?

* It is worthy to be remarked, that the same phrase, *I am*, is made use of by Christ in the 24th verse of this chapter, and an awful denunciation added to it; "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins." Our translators, by the addition of the pronoun *he*, have very much enervated, if not totally altered, the sense of the expression. The original is ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστευσητε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, &c.

It must be, I conceive, departing exceedingly wide from the point intended, to reduce them into mere figure and metaphor. That the apostles of Christ accepted them in their literal sense is evident; for upon an occasion of this kind, when our blessed Lord was discoursing to them upon the subject, and expressed himself in much the same language, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," (John xvi. 28,) his disciples acknowledged that Christ spake plainly, and spake not to them in proverbs; and they expressed their faith in this doctrine in terms which, one would have thought, might have been safely followed by all sincere professors of Christianity to the end of the world: "Now (say they) are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God," (John xvi. 30.)

Once more. When the apostle John says, in one of his epistles, "We know the Son of God is come:" and again, in his gospel, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father:" in both these passages the meaning is liable to no misapprehension, upon the supposition of Christ's eternal nature; but the whole is abundantly clear, intelligible, and not to be mistaken. But put this out of the question, how ridiculous and absurd would it be to say, "the Son of God is come," if Christ was not really and truly the Son of God, and did not possess an exclusive privilege to this title? or, why should the apostle particularize so plain and obvious a proposition, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," if our Lord was simply no other than a human being, and never existed before his birth from the Virgin Mary? How should a human being be otherwise made than in *flesh?* And whom should he dwell with but with men? Above all, what possible claim could this man of flesh have to the dignity mentioned;

the glory which was beheld in him, as of "the only begotten of the Father?" Either I am greatly deceived, or there are many absurdities and even contradictions, in attempting to reconcile those phrases with the Socinian creed! And yet it should seem, nothing can be more plain and evident than those passages of Scripture are, when read without prejudice, and accepted in their first and most obvious meaning.

And here I cannot help digressing one moment, just to observe, how necessary it must be for all Christians who are sincerely desirous of coming to the knowledge of the truth, carefully to consult the sacred volume, in its pure and uncorrupt state, and in its own beautiful simplicity and plainness, unaltered by commentators of any description. It was the commendation given to the Thessalonians by the apostle Paul, that when "they received the word of God, they received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe," (1 Thess. ii. 13.)

But I proceed to the further selection of those passages of Scripture which more particularly point out the pre-existence and dignity of our blessed Lord.

Among the many evidences of this kind, the exordium of St. John's gospel claims our first attention; for it is so much to our purpose, and confirms so decidedly this great article of our faith, that, if the authority of an inspired writer can be at all considered as conclusive or satisfactory, we need no further quotation in proof of it. Either it establishes the fact itself by indisputable testimony, or it must be considered as introducing the sacred contents which follow in his gospel, by a falsehood, and contradiction in the very preface. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God." This memorable passage, which so fully and circumstantially asserts the divinity of Jesus (by ascribing to him such attributes as are only compatible with

Godhead), hath been examined with the most nice and scrupulous criticism, from the days of the apostles to the present hour, in order to invalidate the meaning, and to prove, if possible, that by the term *Word*, the sacred writer intended nothing personal. But all attempts of this kind must be insufficient. For when the apostle so plainly declares, that the word was not only in the beginning *with* God, but actually *was* God, surely nothing can be more decisive: for this would be utterly impossible without admitting a personality. And, as if to remove all objections, and that no doubt might remain concerning the true sense of the word, it is remarkable that the same apostle (who must be supposed the best commentator on himself), uses the same expression in one of his epistles, and there annexes such positive qualities to the term as fully decide the point in question. "That (says he) which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life." Terms these, highly expressive of person, and impossible to be accepted in any other sense. And observe how striking to the purpose what follows: "For the life (says he) was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John i. 1, 2.) "That eternal life;" what a sublime expression! Which not only confirms the certainty of its being personal, but also proves, according to the apostle's ideas, the eternal nature of Him to whom it belongs. Both which are well known to refer to our Lord Jesus Christ. So conclusive and satisfactory are the writings of this beloved apostle, in the very exordium both of his gospel and epistle, on this important doctrine. And were not facts against it, I should think it impossible that any one could open the Testament to these chapters, and read them with an unprejudiced

mind, who could close the book without the fullest conviction of the divinity of Jesus.

Again: the apostle Paul exhorting the Corinthians to charity, makes use of the following remarkable passage: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," (2 Cor. viii. 9.) In this verse the apostle plainly refers to a point which he assumes as a thing unquestionable, and which the Corinthians were not only informed of, but believed; namely, the dignity of Christ, previous to his appearance in the flesh. For otherwise the expression is unwarrantable and false. Christ we know was born and bred in the humblest poverty, and from the first hour of his entrance into the world, to his departure out of it, respecting worldly circumstances, was most poor, and wretched indeed: how then could the apostle call him rich? It is, therefore, clear that he alludes to that glory which Christ himself tells us he had with the Father before the world was, and which he put off when he came upon earth. And it is still more worthy your observation, that the apostle refers this to the consideration of the Corinthians, not as a new matter, which they had never heard of before, or was at all questioned, or disputed among them, but as a fact with which they were all well acquainted, and which no man denied "Ye *know* (says he) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich," &c.

Once more; the same apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, hath a passage equally demonstrative of this doctrine. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," (Philip. ii. 5, *et seq.*) I am perfectly aware what a variety of constructions has been put upon this memorable passage of Scripture, and how different a sense had been made of it, so as to make it correspond to the particular tenets of different denominations of Christians. Melancholy proof of human infirmity! But let commentators be ever so widely divided in opinion as to certain expressions contained in it; whether, when the apostle says, "Christ was in the form of God," he meant a full, and absolute equality, as some have insisted on, or whether he meant that Christ was in the form only, and his dignity of a subordinate, and secondary nature, as others have supposed; give the most unbounded scope to the expression you please, yet all the freedom of translation in the world cannot do away the evident sense of one fact there asserted, namely, that Christ *was* in the form of God, before he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; of consequence it follows, that our blessed Lord had an antecedent state to his humiliation, and appearance in the flesh: so that his being and existence will remain unquestionable, whatever meaning shall be assigned to the phrase of "being in the form of God." Admit, therefore (what on these premises cannot, I think, be denied), that the words of the apostle fairly express this doctrine, and this is all I am contending for at present. Much more, I am convinced, might be made of this passage of Scripture, for it certainly contains great information of our Lord's dignity and character. But these points will more properly meet us under another part of the subject.

From the several quotations of Scripture which have now been brought before you, the first point I had in view to prove, namely, our Lord's pre-existence, is, I hope, fully established. You are in possession of an authority which hath ever been held sacred, and unquestionable. And it now remains with you, under the light

of grace, to determine for yourselves the sufficiency of the evidence. The passages I have selected from others of a similar meaning (and which, if needful, might have been subjoined), are of the plainest nature, and such as I think cannot easily be misunderstood. Let me beg of you, therefore, to read them only with a proper attention, and with a cool unprejudiced mind, and accept them in the sense which is most obvious, and such as every candid person would naturally take them in. And, if the Lord be your teacher, I would venture to rest the cause I am pleading upon the event of their testimony, so clear and explicit are they, in support of this important article of our faith.

But this doctrine will receive a further confirmation, by an evidence still more striking and palpable, when we proceed to consider our blessed Lord under those great and distinguishing attributes in which the sacred writers have represented him, as the *Creator* and *Preserver* of the universe.

All the works of the creation are expressly ascribed to Christ, in many parts of Scripture; and as these are the greatest acts of omnipotency we know of, or can conceive, so do they afford the most positive assurance of his GODHEAD.

The same gospel of St. John, which expresses the pre-existence of the Eternal Word with the Father, speaks of him, at the same time, as the Creator of the universe. For, after saying that the Word was in the beginning with God, and was God, he immediately adds, "All things were made by him." And, as if this were not sufficiently expressive, he repeats the same truth in a more full, and comprehensive manner, by declaring, that "without him was not any thing made that was made." Thus raising our ideas of the omnipotency of Christ to the most exalted height, in clothing him with those great and distinguishing attributes of the Deity. The same truth is asserted again in a subse-

quent verse, when he tells us, "that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not," (John i. 2; iii. 10.) No form of words can more fully testify the power of Christ than the works which are here so plainly ascribed to him; and as these operations of our Lord are equal to the highest conceptions we can possibly frame of a divine being, the consequence is evident, that Christ possessed a divine nature. "His eternal power and Godhead (as the apostle Paul observes), are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," (Romans i. 20.)

But it is not on the testimony of one apostle only that we ground our belief that Christ is the Creator of the universe; there are others of the sacred writers which confirm the same doctrine.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in his first chapter, both ascribes the works of creation and preservation to our Lord, and speaks of him under such great and distinguishing characters, as are altogether irreconcilable with common sense, upon any other idea than that Christ possessed all the attributes of the Godhead. "God (says he), who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." Words surely as full, and expressive of the divinity of Jesus, as language is capable of furnishing, and which it would be little less than blasphemy to apply to any created being whatever. Indeed this whole chapter is so replete with terms denoting the omnipotency and eternity of Christ, and ascribing to him every divine honour, that the sacred writer seems to labour for expressions to describe the dignity and greatness of his person. He calls our Lord the Son of God, the "brightness of

his glory," and the "express image of his person;" of a nature "superior to angels," and most essentially different from all the servants of God, whether prophets or ministering spirits, whether angels or men, which have been sent forth to minister unto them who are the heirs of salvation; the "Creator and Upholder of all things; an Eternal Being, whose throne is for ever and ever:" and whom at his first entrance into the world the angels of God were commanded to worship. When I behold the blessed Redeemer of the universe thus described, under the power of inspiration, as possessing all the peculiar attributes of the GODHEAD, I am astonished how any man who professes to receive the holy Scriptures as the guide of his faith, can behold this divine person so clearly, and circumstantially pointed out, under such great and eternal characters, and yet consider him still as a created being. What language or expressions could the sacred writer have made use of, to convey to us, in stronger terms than he has done, the certainty of our Lord's divinity? Every verse of this chapter seems more or less expressive of it; and so much to the purpose is the whole taken together, that if this convinces not, all further application to Scripture on this point, I fear, will be superfluous and vain.

But though these passages might be sufficient to answer my present argument, and I trust your faith needs no further reference, in order to establish your hearts firm in the persuasion that our Lord is the Creator of the universe; yet, as it cannot but be gratifying to every sincere believer in this important doctrine, to find the truth of it attested in many other parts of the New Testament, I shall add one or two more of the same kind with those we have already reviewed, for its confirmation.

In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the sacred writer draws a comparison between Moses the great lawgiver of the Old Covenant, and Jesus the

Mediator of the New, in order to point out the vast inferiority of the former, when brought in competition with the latter, by reason of the very different nature of their persons, and the different characters they sustained. "For this man," says he, "was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded a house hath more honour than the house, for every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God," (Heb. iii. 3.) Now here is another decisive proof, and not easily to be mistaken, that the sacred writer considered Christ as the Creator of the world, and possessed a divinity equal to such an operation; adding, as an unavoidable inference from what he hath said, that "he who built all things must be God." And to confirm this still more, he proceeds, in the following verse, to point out in what that distinction, which so highly discriminated our Lord from Moses, did consist. "Moses," says he, "verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we." This, it is true, is a figurative mode of expression, but so very plain as to require but little illustration. The apostle couches it under the image of an household, where God is considered as the Father of the family, and Christ the Son and heir. Moses, and all other messengers, whether angels, prophets, or apostles, are servants and attendants only. The superiority of our blessed Lord's character, and the divinity of his person, could hardly have been represented under any figure more apt or expressive than this; which so fully points out his relationship with the Father, and the essential line of distinction which must for ever take place between the son and heir of a family, and the highest order of servants whatever. Consider the character of Moses as it is mentioned in Scripture, and then behold him in the class of servants to our Lord, and you will require nothing more to shew you the very different characters they sustained, and, of con-

sequence, the very different point of view in which they ought to be regarded. "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel." Deut. xxxiv. 10—12.

So again, we read upon another occasion, the decided superiority of Moses over all prophets and messengers whom Jehovah ever sent, when Miriam and Aaron rebelled against the government of Moses, and assumed an equal authority with him. "Hath the Lord spoken only to him," say they, "hath he not spoken also by us?" The determination of God is full to the point. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numb. xii. 6. *et seq.*) Such is the exalted description given in Scripture of this highly favoured servant of the Lord. But the apostle tells us that this Moses, this mighty and greatest of all prophets which arose in Israel, when brought in comparison with Jesus was nothing. He was but a servant to Christ; and though faithful in all his house, "for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;" yet, in every point of view, he was subordinate to him who was a Son in his own house, "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Can any thing with more pointed emphasis define the dignity of our blessed Lord's character?

You will not, I hope, think it trespassing too much

upon your time and patience, if I add to these testimonies one passage more from Scripture, in confirmation of the important doctrine we are considering; for it is peculiarly apposite to our purpose, and seems expressive of every particular by which the divinity of Jesus as an omnipotent Being can be illustrated and proved. The passage I allude to is in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. In which, speaking of Jesus Christ, he thus expresses himself; "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.* By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

This passage is most happily calculated to clear up every possible doubt (if any could yet remain) concerning the real dignity of our blessed Lord; and it is altogether so much to the purpose, that no form of words could have been brought within the same compass, equally strong and expressive to the point in question. It should seem, indeed, as though the apostle, by the spirit of prophecy, had foreseen the doubts and objections of certain Christians, and particularly directed his attention, in this place, to silence every scruple concerning our Lord's true character, by declaring his possession of such attributes as could only be consistent with true and proper divinity. For to shew Christ's pre-existence, he first styles him the "image of the invisible God, born or begotten before every creature."

* "First-born of every creature." I have preserved the phrase as it stands in our present translation, because I presume not to correct it; but it is well known, the original, which is πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, literally means the first-begotten before all creation; and the general sense of the verse clearly makes it so. For he who made all things in heaven and earth, must himself have had existence underived from creation.

To prove his possession of unlimited power, he next declares, that "all things were created by him:" and that no one, either through weakness or perversion, might misconstrue his sense and meaning, he goes on to prove, that Christ possessed this sovereign power inherently, and underived from another; for all things (he says) were not only created *by* him, but *for* him: thereby silencing all the arguments of those who allow Christ to have been the Creator of the world, yet regard him not as the efficient cause, but merely as the agent of his Father; whereas the apostle positively says, "All things were created by him, and for him." And still more, to put the matter beyond all doubt, he repeats the same truth again, in saying, that "by him do all things consist." And lastly, to remove all possible ideas of a local power circumscribed by space, or limited in operation to this world only, he tells us, that "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth;" not simply material substances, such as our eyes behold, and no other, but immaterial, "visible and invisible:" and these not only of the lowest order, but even the highest and the best, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All without exception were created by him, and for him, and by him do all things consist." Thus, as with an indelible seal, the apostle, in this chapter, hath stamped the certainty of the divine nature of the blessed Redeemer of the world, ascribing such attributes and perfections to him, as are utterly irreconcilable with any possible idea of a created being, and can with justice be applied to none but the one true God.

I have now finished all the quotations from Scripture which I conceive to be necessary in proof of the great object I had in view in this discourse. And if the evidence of the inspired writers can be at all depended upon, no possible question will remain of the truth of what they have so positively asserted, that our Lord existed

in a state of glory antecedent to his incarnation, and is the Creator and Preserver of the universe. And surely these perfections include such essential attributes of the Godhead, as fully prove our Lord's claim to this distinguished character. For (as an apostle justly reasons), "He who built all things is God."

When we behold the blessed Reedemer of the world revealed to us under such august and eternal distinctions, possessing an existence "in glory with his Father before all worlds," the Maker and Upholder of all things; is it possible to see our Lord thus represented, without being struck with horror at a presumption so dreadful as that of dethroning the Son of God, and reducing him to the level of a poor creature like ourselves? Would this meek and humble Saviour have arrogated to himself divine honours, unless his pretensions had been well founded? Or can any conceive that he would have declared he possessed glory with his Father, with other expressions of a similar nature, intimating his pre-existent state, when that existence began only at his incarnation? Much less would the apostles of such a Master have dared to apply to him the distinguishing characteristics of the supreme God, but upon the most perfect conviction of their justice and propriety.

Pause one moment, I beseech you, and seriously consider the importance of these questions. No act of omnipotence which our present faculties are capable of conceiving, surpasses the works of creation. And hence we find, in the Old Testament, when God is pleased to reveal himself to the Israelites, in order to impress their minds with a proper awe, and reverence of the astonishing greatness of his character; he refers them to the works of creation as proofs of his omnipotency, and calls upon them to draw a just and proper distinction between *his* eternal nature, and the perishable idols of the heathens around them. "Thus saith the Lord, who hath created the heavens, and stretched them out;

I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me. I, even I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Behold the gods of the heathen are of nothing, and their works of nought: Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob; Let them bring forth and shew us what shall happen, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together," (Isaiah xl. xli. &c.) In these, and the like awful characters, hath the Lord displayed the sovereignty of his power, as instanced in the works of the creation; and there is no one of the divine attributes so frequently referred to in holy Scripture, in order to strike the mind of man with a proper conviction of the greatness of God, as this of his omnipotency. Probably because it is best suited to our present conceptions, which are most likely to be affected by great and magnificent objects.

But, perhaps, a difficulty may seem to arise, how to reconcile with each other those equivalent phrases, which ascribe the creation of the universe both to the Father and to the Son. If God the Father be thus clearly revealed in Scripture as the maker of all things, and if the same authority teach us to understand the same of the Son; how is this to be consistently explained? This difficulty is at once removed by a reference to the same unerring standard of truth, from whence we learn, that there is such an intimate union subsisting between the Father and the Son, that the acts of the one are equally the acts of the other: according to our

Lord's own account of this mystery, "Whatsoever works the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son," (John v. 19.) In short, the fact itself once admitted, that Christ is the Creator of all things, the doctrine of the divine unity will naturally be included. If you wish to go further, and question how, and in what manner this unity consists? here I remain silent; reason is incompetent to answer; and the word of God, which is our only guide in the mysterious points of religion, hath not condescended to inform us. Perhaps it was impossible to explain it in terms suitable to the apprehensions of mankind. It was thought sufficient, therefore, to give proofs of the fact itself, without accounting for the method by which this connection is preserved. Our Lord's own declarations enable us to ascertain the certainty of the doctrine, but they leave the mind wholly at a loss to form any just idea of the manner of its operation. "I and my Father are one," (John x. 30.) "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," (John v. 17.) "All things that the Father hath are mine," (John xvi. 15.) "I can do nothing of myself, but my Father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. What things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," (John v. 19.) These expressions very evidently determine the truth of the thing itself; but how, and in what way, this hypostatic union is preserved, I have not the smallest conception: no more than I can explain those equally mysterious passages of the apostle when he says, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," (2 Corinth. v. 19.) "And in him (that is in Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (Coloss. ii. 9.) But when I trace, through every part of the sacred volume, the evident footsteps of a Being equal to all the ideas I can possibly frame of GODHEAD, in the person of Jesus Christ; and such actions as leave at an infinite distance every character among the sons of men; I am deeply smitten with the

conviction of his divine nature, and can plainly perceive that there is somewhat more intended than what at first appears in these words of Christ: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal him."* In short, when I contemplate the whole of this awful and mysterious subject, as it is connected with the history of our blessed Lord, and consider the

* Matthew xi. 27. Here is a memorable text of Scripture, which, if I mistake not, affords the most decisive determination to the great point in question, and is of itself sufficient to prove the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the incomprehensibility of his nature. There is a reiteration of the doctrine indeed, and the truth is confirmed in a two-fold testimony. If "no man knoweth the Son but the Father;" is not this at once a positive proof that his nature must be infinite which is known only to the infinite mind of God? And could this be said, but upon the fullest evidence, that he of whom it is said is of the same essence with God? But as if this was not enough, the fact is stated again under another form: "neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Here is, if possible, a still more palpable testimony to the same great truth. For I suppose the incomprehensibility of the divine nature will hardly be questioned; so that by admitting the perfect apprehension of the Father by the Son, while it is hidden, and unknown, to every other being in the universe; nothing can more decidedly prove the Deity of the Son. The reciprocal knowledge of the person, of each other, in the unity of the Godhead, (which is among the distinguishing attributes of GODHEAD, and which for ever draws the line of separation between the infinite Creator and all created beings whatever;) marks most accurately the great character of each. So very conclusive and satisfactory in point is this single text of Scripture.

But while so much may be gathered from it, by way of carrying conviction to the breast of the unbeliever; it ought not to be passed over and forgotten, what a refreshing consolation it offers at the same time to the sincere follower of Jesus. Though the knowledge both of the Father and of the Son is hidden from all penetration by the mere light of the human understanding; yet where Christ is graciously pleased to afford the knowledge of the Father, every proper apprehension suited to the present condition of man is then given to those humble souls, to whom the Son will reveal him. They know indeed both the Father and the Son, by the power of that grace which they feel in their hearts. They know that Christ is "one with the Father, over all God blessed for ever: being rich unto all that call upon him." And from "the anointing which they have received from him, they need not that any man should teach them;" but can say with the apostle, "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3.

the defective state of our present faculties, the very great probability (to say the least of it,) that human beings, after all their researches, will never penetrate very deeply into the secret dispensations of God: I stand amazed that any man should be bold enough to refuse his assent to doctrines because they are not commensurate to reason; much more that he should deny the divinity of the Son of God upon the presumptive conclusions of his own mind, in opposition to such a body of evidence as is contained in every part of the pure oracles of God. While the argument remains at all doubtful, which the hardest Socinian will scarcely venture to pronounce finished, surely it must be safer to err (if it be an error) on one side than the other; to give too much dignity to the great Saviour of the world, whom the Father delighteth to honour, rather than too little. For the very reason which Christ gives, why the future judgment is committed unto the Son, is on this express account, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

But I am anticipating the observations which will come with greater force and propriety hereafter. Let me only hope that enough hath now been said to convince your judgment, that *He*, of whom these great things are so confidently said, cannot possibly be a creature. And since common sense revolts at the absurdity of supposing him divine, and yet not God; I trust we are among the number of those humble and teachable minds, who presume not to reject the testimony of Scripture, because the doctrine of God Incarnate is too mysterious for reason to explore.

SERMON III.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures,—they are they which testify of me.

THE noble faculty of reason, which is the distinguishing excellence of man, among other eminent uses is evidently given him to direct his judgment, and to guard his mind from error and delusion. From the present imperfect state of things, however, reason, unassisted by some superior principle, finds perpetual difficulties, which perplex and confound the understanding. Human nature is always open to imposition. We frequently behold objects through false mediums. We argue from mistaken principles. We adopt opinions which we afterwards find to be erroneous; and yet too often, from the influence of those prepossessions, we draw our conclusions. Hence, therefore, we cannot be too much upon our guard, how we hastily determine on any matter. After all our most vigilant observations, how little knowledge are we able to obtain even of the most common events of life, which pass in daily review before us! But when the great and awful points of religion are the subject of inquiry; when that sacred mystery hid from ages, the wonder of the universe, and which even angels do not comprehend, but "desire to look into," (1 Peter i. 12,) when this is brought before the mind for discussion, with what caution ought we to decide on a matter so abstruse and difficult! Here surely, if any where, reason finds her weakness and insufficiency, and therefore should gladly implore that divine illumination from above, which is promised in Scripture "to the meek and humble."

In the preceding discourse some observations were made with a view to ascertain the dignity of our Lord. His pre-existence to his advent in the flesh was proved from the authority of Scripture; and this fact was supported by another striking circumstance founded on the same testimony, namely, his being the Creator and Preserver of the universe. Under such great and eternal characters does the Author of the Christian faith appear in those sacred records.

But, on the supposition of the truth of these premises, an observation meets us which demands attention. It is this. If Christ really possessed this existence and glory with his Father before the world, and is the maker and upholder of all things; is it not more than probable that some appearance of him should have been discovered, through the many intermediate ages, from the fall of man to his advent in the flesh? For though the incarnation of the Son of God, for reasons unknown to us, was postponed to what is called "the fulness of time," in which all the predictions concerning this illustrious character of the Messiah centered; yet surely it is but reasonable to expect some vestige, at least, of this divine person in the earlier ages of the world, especially as God was pleased occasionally to vouchsafe to his fallen and degraded creatures some manifestations of his will.

This observation is certainly a very proper one, and claims some regard. And though I cannot conceive a proof of this kind to be necessary, on the supposition that the fact itself of Christ's pre-existence is clearly assured, yet if any traces can be found in the Old Testament, corresponding to the account we find of him in the New, they will, no doubt, mutually illustrate and confirm each other; and altogether serve to place the blessed Redeemer's character in such an exalted point of view, as may help to strengthen our faith in this great article of religion.

And here a subject opens to our investigation, which

may engage the closest study, and will reward the greatest exertions of the most enlightened mind. In searching the sacred volume for the footsteps of him "whose goings forth have been from everlasting," (Micah v. 2,) perhaps it will be found that all the dispensations of God, relating to mankind, from the very first dawn of revelation, have been uniformly and invariably carried on in the person of his divine Son: that he is JEHOVAH, to whom is ascribed the creation of the world; who resided occasionally among men before the fall; whose voice Adam heard in the garden of Eden; who personally appeared to Abraham, and to many others, in the patriarchal ages; spake unto Moses from the flaming bush; went before the children of Israel through the wilderness; descended on Mount Sinai enshrined in glory, and gave the law; and was visible, in a great variety of instances, to that people, as best suited the various purposes of his will. In short, from the creation of the world, to the final consummation of all things, it is he, and he only, who is the visible JEHOVAH, and hath carried on, and will complete, the executive part of the divine government, appearing under the several characters mentioned of him in Scripture, according as the circumstances of mankind required, in the several ages of the world. Hence he is our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and finally will be our Judge, when he cometh, agreeable to his promise, at the last day, to close the whole of his government in righteousness; "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe," (2 Thess. i. 10.)

Now, whether this opinion can derive any countenance and authority from Scripture, is the important question; but it must be confessed there is nothing in it which is foreign to our most natural ideas of the Supreme Being, or repugnant either to reason or revelation. On the contrary, there seems to be an admirable consistency and agreement with both. For that the same divine

person who made the world, and by whose energy and power it is continually preserved and supported, should interpose to rectify and amend the evils crept into it by human infirmity, and at length should come to judge the moral subjects of his government, who by their different abilities are placed in a situation of becoming accountable creatures; this is certainly just what might be expected, and corresponding to all our notions of right reason. And, on the supposition that this is the true state of the case, I will venture to say, the mind of man cannot conceive any thing more magnificent and awful, than that of a divine and almighty Being descending from a state of glory, and taking upon him a form of flesh, in order "to repair the desolations of many generations," and to restore perfect order among all the works of God. The whole process of the divine dispensations, according to this scheme, is begun, carried on, and will be completed, by him who "is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8.)

It cannot be supposed, in the very nature of things, that human faculties are competent to trace so mysterious a subject very far. "The way of God (says the Psalmist) is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known," (Psalm lxxvii. 19.) Yet as the divine goodness, in order as it were to excite the attention of man, hath graciously condescended to throw some rays of light around the darkness of the scene, and hath moreover promised the assistance of his Holy Spirit to all that, in humility of mind, seek instruction from above; there appears an evident duty, as well as a reward of the noblest kind, attending the investigation of this most interesting of all subjects. And what can engage the attention of the human mind with so much satisfaction, as the humble endeavour to explore the footsteps of that great Benefactor of mankind, to whom we owe such inexpressible obligations? In doing this, we are also obeying the precept which our blessed LORD gave to

the Jews, upon a similar occasion, when he referred them to the sacred writings for the evidences of his commission and authority: "Search the Scriptures (says Christ,) for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." In obedience to this command let us direct our attention to this pursuit; and, after having first implored the Holy Spirit to be our guide, let us examine what information we can gather from thence respecting our divine LORD. Perhaps, now "the vail of the Old Testament is done away in Christ, we may," through the divine blessing, "with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of our Lord," (2 Cor. iii. 15, 18.)

The leading object of the present discourse will be to search the Scriptures for any traces of Christ, in the early ages of the world, sufficient to establish our belief of his personal appearance among men.

The invisibility of the Divine Being to mortal eye is well known to be the doctrine of both Testaments of Scripture. "Thou canst not see my face and live," saith Jehovah to Moses. (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) And the apostles of Christ assert the same thing. "No man (saith St. John) hath seen God at any time," (John i. 18.) And St. Paul assures us, "that God dwelleth in that light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," (1 Tim. vi. 16.) He is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," (1 Tim. i. 17.) And our blessed Lord himself, to sum up the evidence, hath declared, that "no man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father," (John vi. 46.) "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape," (John v. 37.) From all which it is evident that the sight of God* is inadmissible to man in his present state.

* Here, once for all, I would beg to observe, respecting the glorious name of God, in order for a clear, spiritual, and scriptural apprehension. We are too apt to confine the name to the Person of the FATHER.

This being a fact perfectly incontrovertible, the question is, what are we to understand from those numerous passages of Scripture where the presence of the Lord is most positively assured, unless we apply it to the person of God's only begotten Son, who is declared to be "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person?" Without referring to all the instances of this kind which might be brought forward in proof, I believe every one who is at all conversant with the sacred writings, will immediately recollect, that there are many very striking passages where the personal appearance of Jehovah is declared to have happened, and upon various occasions. I am not speaking of such as are visional, or figurative, but real and certain. I am sensible of the allowances to be made for the metaphorical language of Scripture, so suited to the genius of the Eastern nations. Thus, the *right arm* of the Lord, and the *voice* of the Lord; these, no doubt, are figurative expressions: and earthquakes, storms, and tempests, by way of figure, are sometimes called *angels*, and *messengers* of Jehovah. But this is not the case in the circumstances to which I allude. When, for example, we read in the Book of Exodus, "that Jehovah talked with Moses face to face, as a man talketh with his friend," (Exod. xxxiii. 11.) So again, when in a conference like this with the great father of the faithful, Jehovah assumes to himself a supreme

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when we find it alone, and unaccompanied with any other of the Persons in the GODHEAD. But this is wrong. All the Persons in the GODHEAD are included; and all are alike meant, except where the Persons of either are personally mentioned. Hence, when it is said, "God was in CHRIST," (2 Cor. v. 19,) all the Persons were and are in CHRIST. So when it is said, (Coloss. ii. 9,) "In Him," that is CHRIST, "dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily," all are equally included. It would be very helpful, under divine teaching, to keep this always in remembrance, because all approaches to GOD implies FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. Each person in the GODHEAD being alike GOD; and to whom no approaches can be made to either, but through the mediation of CHRIST. Hence, in respect to the GODHEAD, all are alike invisible. God is only seen in CHRIST. By the medium of our nature He is the visible JEHOVAH, (John i. 18.)

power, and speaks of his future dispensations respecting mankind, not as the agent of another, but as acting in his own name, and by his own authority, (Gen. xvii.) And when it is said also, in another place, "that Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of the people saw the God of Israel," (Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.) These instances surely can never be called visional, symbolical, or figurative. It is plain sense and plain meaning, and if there be any one matter of fact on which we may safely depend, it must be here; for if these repeated assurances of the personal appearance of Jehovah can, by any plausible argument, be reduced to a mere figure or vision, there is nothing to be met with in the whole volume of Scripture but, by a like accommodation, may be as easily construed away from its first and most obvious acceptation.

That all these appearances were in the person of the Son of God, I by no means assert: upon so mysterious a subject I would be understood as speaking with the utmost caution and diffidence. Could the point once be proved that it was our blessed Lord, there would be an end to all controversy respecting his divinity; such manifestations of GODHEAD, accompanied with such declarations of character, must for ever silence all doubts on this head. But if they be real appearances, and not figurative, and if (as an apostle tells us) that though "no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," (John i. 11,) it seems very likely to suppose that all the accounts we meet with in Scripture of the manifestation of a personal Jehovah, might, with great safety, be explained by this infallible rule.

But, that we may not too hastily determine on this important matter, let us search the word of God further, and see whether we can gain any additional information that may illustrate this point more fully.

One leading principle, to help us in this inquiry, the

Jewish Scriptures happily supply. In the relation they give of this appearance of Jehovah, we find, throughout the whole history, but one and the same being uniformly described. However distinguished by different appellations or titles, as might best correspond to the immediate purpose of his appearing, whether he be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, or the Angel of the Covenant, still one and the same person is invariably intended. The Jehovah which expelled Adam from the garden of Eden, was the same Jehovah who made a covenant with Abraham, and who declared that "he would not leave him until he had done all that he had spoken to him of, and that in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xxviii. 15.) Accordingly we find he renewed this covenant with the patriarchs, and again revealed himself to Moses, from the flaming bush, under the same almighty distinctions. And when, from the Egyptian bondage, after a series of the most stupendous events, he had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, until he had brought them into the promised Canaan; upon every occasion in which he was graciously pleased to manifest his presence, the same great character was invariably proclaimed, by which he was distinguished as their God, and they his people, and the sheep of his pasture. At length, when the Israelites were settled in their own borders, and a temple was built to the more immediate honour of their Lord, though the personal appearance of Jehovah was now withdrawn, the shechinah, or manifestation of his glory, still appeared, shadowing the mercy-seat, but without form or similitude; yet before his departure, and when the temple was destroyed, the same Jehovah assured them, by his prophets, that "he would return again in the latter days, and dwell in the midst of them," (Zech. ii. 10;) that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than the former," (Hag. ii. 9;) and that he would make a "new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house

of Judah, not according to the covenant that he ha made with their fathers, in the day when he had brough them from the land of Egypt," (Jer. xxxi. 31.) All whicl evidently and clearly proves, that one and the same Al- mighty Being constantly presided over the affairs of his church.

This identity of person and character will be of great help to us in our inquiry to whom it belongs. And if we can find a single instance of sufficient authority from the New Testament, to suppose it applicable to our blessed Lord, it will throw a considerable degree of light upon the whole history, and become not a little conclu- sive to the point in question.

Among many circumstances of this kind, which might be brought forward as presumptive evidences to induce the belief, that the personal Jehovah of the Old Testa- ment is the same being with the Lord of the New, the following are remarkably striking:

When Jehovah appeared to Moses in the flame of fire in the bush, he was pleased to reveal himself under that great and eternal distinction, "I am that I am," (Exod. iii. 14;) which is the very appellation Christ as- sumed, when, discoursing with the Jews on the subject of his mission, he claimed a priority of existence to Abraham, and said, "Before Abraham was, I am," (John viii. 58;) an argument strongly presumptive, at least, that when our blessed Lord distinguished himself by this incommunicable name of the great Jehovah, he referred to this awful scene, and thereby intimated his real character. And that the Jews considered our Lord's meaning in this sense is more than probable, for they immediately took up stones to cast at him, for the sup- posed blasphemy; but he, by virtue of this very divinity, in a miraculous manner, so concealed himself from their knowledge, that "going through the midst of them," they knew him not, "and he passed by," (John viii. 59.)

Another instance, very highly presumptive to justify

our belief that our blessed Lord was the very Jehovah mentioned in the Old Testament, we meet with in the writings of the apostle Paul, in which he is illustrating a passage of the Jewish history. The passage is this. The children of Israel, in their journey through the wilderness, pitched in Rephidim, where they murmured for want of water; upon which occasion Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord commanded Moses, saying, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and the rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there, upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."* Now, that no one may be at a loss for the explanation of this passage, we have the authority of an apostle to apply this personal appearance of Jehovah to our blessed Lord. "For they drank," says he, "of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."*

Similar to this, upon another occasion, in the history of that people, when Jehovah sent fiery serpents to destroy some for their disobedience and murmuring, the apostle, in his reflections and observations upon their unworthy behaviour, uses this remarkable argument to his Corinthian converts, to deter them from the imitation of so bad an example. "Neither," says he, "let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."† A plain proof that it was the opinion of St. Paul that the Jehovah who conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, and manifested himself to them upon various occasions, was no other than Christ.

Lastly; the Evangelist St. John makes an application of a passage in one of the prophets, which seems

* Compare Exodus xvii. with 1 Cor. x.

† Compare Numbers xxi. with 1 Cor. x.

to remove all doubt that the glory of Jehovah, which the prophet beheld in a vision, was the glory of Christ himself. Our blessed Lord having wrought no conviction upon the hearts of his hearers, at a time when preaching his gospel to them, though his doctrine was attested with the operation of miracles, this brought to mind to the apostle the prediction of Isaiah the prophet: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."* This quotation from the prophet, which the Evangelist without hesitation applies to Christ, carries with it an evidence not easily refuted. And if the authority of such an expositor is at all valid to our argument, it must, I think, have great weight with every candid mind.†

But these evidences will be strengthened in their importance, when we proceed to consider also certain peculiarities ascribed to the person of Christ by the sacred writers, and assumed by Jesus himself; which could not, with the smallest shadow of reason, be applied to him, but under the idea that he was the Jehovah and God of Israel, which appeared to our fathers in the wilderness. St. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, speaking of the eternal Word, "which was in the beginning with God, and was God; who made the world, was in the world, and the world knew him not," adds also, that "he came unto his own, and his own

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* Compare Isaiah vi. with John xii.

† It were easy to adduce many instances more than those I have mentioned, but one or two are sufficient for the purpose: some of those I have omitted are very much to the point in question, and have been very largely treated of by other writers. Such as the similarity between the glory of Jehovah in the mount, and our Lord's transfiguration, and which induced those reflections in the mind of the apostle Peter. The appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host to Joshua; the preaching of Christ in the days of Noah, as mentioned by St. Peter, &c. &c.

received him not," (John i.) This is a strong implication of Christ's being relatively known before. For, whether we consider the expression *his own* as referring to the Jews, who were called God's peculiar people, or whether by right, as the Creator of the world; in either case his pre-existence, and personal connection with mankind, by virtue of some priority of right and inheritance, must be pre-supposed and admitted. It could not be in his character, as the Redeemer of the world, for in this case the right would have preceded the purchase; and moreover, this would have made the expression inapplicable to the Jews only. It evidently proves, therefore, some antecedent connection, by virtue of which Christ was their Lord, and they his people. And where are we to look for this but in that history where it is said, " Jehovah chose them to be a special people to himself, above all the people who were upon the face of the earth?" Deut. vii. 6.

Again; Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem, and the particular and affecting expressions he made use of upon that occasion, is another very great probability (to speak the least of it) of our Lord's personal appearrance and connection with the children of Israel, before his incarnation. St. Luke informs us, that " when he came near to Jerusalem, he beheld the city, and wept over it," (Luke xix. 41;) and St. Matthew, in his account of this transaction, adds, that he brake forth into that tender apostrophe, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew xxiii. 37.) Now it becomes a very proper question, under what part of the sacred history of the life of Jesus Christ do we find this anxiety for Israel, before the season of his humiliation in the flesh? In what page of the Testament

are we to look for those repeated instances of his love and solicitude for them? There is no one passage that can, with the smallest propriety, be considered as relating to Christ's passionate lamentation over this unhappy people. It is plain, therefore, that he must have alluded to some former period, when he says, he would often have gathered the children of Israel together, with an anxiety equal to that of the hen, when she seeks to cover her brood from danger, with the spreading of her wings. And corresponding to this idea, we find, in the 31st chapter of Deuteronomy, that Jehovah is represented as exceedingly anxious for the preservation of his people; that "he found them in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; that he led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. Jehovah alone did lead him, there was no strange God in him." Now if Jehovah alone did lead him, and Christ, in his anxiety, evidently referred to some former instances of his affection; is it not a most probable conclusion, that this history is altogether applicable to our blessed Lord?

These circumstances are to me, I confess, very strong presumptive evidences at least, that Christ was the visible Jehovah, who occasionally appeared both before, and under the Jewish dispensation. The application made by the sacred writers in the history of Christ to that period; the peculiarities distinguishable in our Lord's person; and the expressions he himself made use of, will hardly admit of any other construction.

But there is another argument, yet remaining to be considered, which gives strength and confirmation to the whole, and is certainly superior to every other: on the truth of which, if I mistake not, depends, in a great measure, the connection of both Testaments of Scripture, and which, indeed, if it be not allowed, destroys all consistency between them: and that is, Christ cannot

be the Messiah, nor the real lawgiver of Christians, unless he answers to the character predicted of him in the Scriptures of the Jews.

This view of the subject is striking, and deserves a more particular discussion.

I have already observed, in the course of this sermon, that the history of the Jewish church, by preserving an identity of person in the great and almighty Protector of their nation, has happily supplied us with one leading principle to guide as through the mysterious part of our subject. And here it becomes most eminently serviceable. For it is evident, from all the history of that people, that the Jehovah who appeared to Abraham, and made an everlasting covenant with him, and confirmed this covenant to his descendants in the solemn promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, and continued the manifestation of his presence among that people occasionally, as circumstances required, until the building of the temple; expressly promised, before he withdrew the glory of his appearance, that he would come again in the latter days, and dwell among them. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord," (Zech. ii. 10.) "And in that day shall it be said, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation," (Isaiah xxv. 9.) All which plainly refers to one and the same person and character; for in that day it is said, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth; and there shall be one Lord, and his name one," (Zech. xiv. 9.) And as a further confirmation of this, the prophet Jeremiah expressly declares, that the Jehovah who made the old covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, is the same Jehovah who would return again in the latter days, and make a new one. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and

the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.)

Now from the testimony of these Scriptures we have authority to draw the following conclusions: first, That the same Almighty Jehovah which led, and governed, and protected the children of Israel, during the whole of their eventful history, was expected to come again and dwell among them in the latter days: and, secondly, that this Jehovah at his return, was to make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, and different from the covenant which he had before made with their fathers, in the day he took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. Hence, therefore, it seems to follow, that if Christ be not the Jehovah which manifested himself to the Israelites in the wilderness, according to those scriptures he is not the Jehovah they were taught to expect, and consequently, not the Messiah. Neither could he be the Jehovah which was to make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel, unless he be the same Jehovah which made the *old*.

And this identity of person and character, is not only essential to be preserved for the completion of these promises of Scripture, but must be carefully distinguished on another equally important consideration. The Jews were plainly taught to expect a change in their system of legislation, but they were as plainly taught it should be accomplished by one and the same being. The Jehovah which was to make the new cove-

nant, was the founder of the old; and nothing less than this could certainly be sufficient for its alteration: for as the law given on Mount Sinai was of divine authority, and accompanied with all the manifestations of the divine presence, it is evident none but the original lawgiver himself could possibly supersede, or do away its obligation. Nor was this change in the law of Moses the smallest impeachment of the immutability of the divine nature. For the alteration was not in God, but man. The *moral* law still continues the same, and will remain for ever; for it is of eternal duration: and as Christ observed, "Sooner might heaven and earth pass than one jot or tittle of this law to fail. He came," therefore, "not to destroy this law, but to fulfil it." But the *ceremonial* law could be no longer necessary, when the purpose for which it ministered was answered and completed; when the substance was once come, the shadow was, of course, done away. Besides, many reasons concurred also to render the removal of the Mosaic ordinances expedient. When the Israelites became scattered into divers countries, there could no longer remain the possibility of performing the sacrifices at the Temple, nor of appearing three times in a year at their solemn feasts at Jerusalem. And when the kingdom of the Messiah was come, which by a progressive influence was to extend over the whole earth, the name of Jehovah, no longer limited to an handful of people, was to be "great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense was to be offered unto his name, and a pure offering."

From these united considerations it appears to be a fair and probable conclusion, that the great lawgiver of Christians is the original lawgiver of the Jews; for this preserves an harmony (which otherwise is broken) between both Testaments of Scripture, and proves them to be consistent with the divine immutability on which the whole is founded.

If then these circumstances, collectively taken from

a body of evidence sufficient to rest our belief on, that the great Author of the Christian faith, whose dignity and character we have in part already reviewed, who was in possession, as he himself assures us, of "glory with the Father before the world was," and whom the sacred writers declare to have been in conjunction with his Father, the *Maker* and *Preserver* of *all things:* if the circumstances, I say, collectively taken, authorize our belief that Jesus is the Jehovah who personally appeared under the Jewish dispensation, and in the earlier ages of the world, I think it will follow, that every objection to his divinity must yield to the clear and express revelation of his having appeared among men previous to his incarnation; and we have reason to believe, that all the ordinations of God respecting mankind, have been uniformly and invariably conducted in the person of his blessed Son.

Though what hath been now offered cannot, from the very nature of things, be considered more than the faint outlines of a subject, which, taken in all its parts, surpasses human abilities to explore; yet I should hope it is sufficient to give some little insight (as far as we have Scripture authority to carry us) into this part of the mysterious government of God. And from this view we not only perceive a wonderful consistency throughout the whole design of revelation, but also the conclusion naturally resulting from it; namely, that one and the same Almighty Architect both planned and executed the physical and moral structure of our nature.

And now I should hope, the evidence for the GODHEAD of Jesus, like a mighty river, increasing as it descends from the numerous streams pouring into it on every side, swells upon your mind and carries all opposition before it. And when we come to view the testimonies which appear in the history of our blessed Lord during his incarnation, all leading to the same conclusion, our hearts, overpowered with the torrent of conviction, will cry out with Nathaniel, "This is the Son of God, this is the King of Israel."

SERMON IV.

ACTS XXVIII. 23.

Persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets.

ONE of the decisive and infallible evidences of the Christian religion is derived from the Scriptures of the prophets. The wonderful circumstances relating to the future kingdom of the Messiah, are described by one or other of those holy men of God, with such precision and particularity, as cannot but fill the mind with astonishment, when we discover the prediction and the event bearing the most minute correspondence. Delivered in ages remote from the time of completion, and the subject of their prophecy being altogether improbable, according to all human ideas, we cannot suppose it to arise from any effects of foresight or penetration. Nor can it be said, with any colour of reason, that the prediction was written after the accomplishment of the event. It is only to be accounted for, as proceeding from the powerful and immediate inspiration of Almighty God; and as such, therefore, it stamps, with the strongest seal of truth, the cause to which it is intended to bear evidence, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Revelation xix. 10.

If we look into these inspired writings with a view to answer the more immediate object of our present pursuit, the great question will be; under what character the Jews were taught by their prophets to expect their promised Messiah, and what were to be the specific marks of his person and offices?

It may well be supposed the appearance of such an august Being upon the theatre of this world, and who was coming on that grand embassy, to save and restore a fallen race, must have had some most striking and prominent features by which he might be known. If the divine Saviour thought the object important enough to typify and predict it through a long course of ages; it is but reasonable to suppose also, that those types and prophecies must have particularly shadowed the outlines of his person and character.

Let us search the sacred records once more for information on this point, and see what were the individual characters which the Scriptures of the prophets taught mankind to look for in the great Saviour of the world.

It is well known, and therefore needless to be insisted on in this place, that the prospect of a Messiah was the leading principle of the Jewish religion. Through the many intermediate ages from the promise of this deliverer, to the period of his appearance, the minds of men were continually occupied with the expectation of this auspicious event. Every thing ceremonial in the service of the Jews was, for the most part, typical or figurative of it. I pass over the general features by which the Messiah was described, and by which Jesus of Nazareth identified his claim to that character. Neither the precise time of his appearance, nor the circumstances by which that appearance was to be distinguished and known, as answering to the spirit of prophecy, are immediate to my present purpose. In this point all Christians of every denomination are agreed, and it is needless, therefore, to dwell upon them. The great and only object now in view is, to ascertain, if possible, what was to be the real character of the promised Messiah, according to the language of prophecy; and I shall have no further recourse to the Scriptures of the prophets, than as they tend to the illustration of this important article.

Among the writings of those inspired men, we find the Messiah so minutely described, under one or other of his offices, that an attentive mind cannot help being struck when he beholds the wonderful vein of prophecy which runs through the whole of their works. Some of them so very plain and obvious, that even an ordinary reader, who considers them in a prophetic sense, must be instantly led to make application of them to the person of our blessed Lord. Others, indeed, are rather hidden and obscure, and such as we should not have been able, with any precision or certainty, to have known Christ by, if the apostles, in their expositions of those Scriptures, under the assistance of the Spirit of God, had not pointed out their allusion. Those who have leisure and ability to go through the whole of the prophecies on this important subject, will find enough to excite their admiration, and confirm their conviction; but I am necessarily limited to selections only. And of these the first place is due, in priority of time, to the predictions of the royal prophet David.

He speaks of Christ, in his Book of Psalms, under so many and various particulars of his incarnation, his sufferings, his death, and exaltation at the right hand of power, that it would extend the subject much beyond what I propose, to bring before you every prediction we meet with in his writings, which hath a clear reference to the person of our Lord.

If the second Psalm can be supposed to have any prophetic meaning, nothing can be more to the purpose in proof of the divinity of him to whom it is applicable. The anointed of the Lord is there said to be "the King of Zion," and "the Son of God," whose inheritance was to be "over the heathen," and his possessions to extend "to all the kingdoms of the world." Similar to this, in the 89th Psalm, we find the same person predicted under the title of "the Holy One," and "one that is mighty," and declared to be God's "first-born, higher

than the kings of the earth." And that these things were not spoken of David himself, but as a type of the Messiah, is evident, both from the expressions made use of, and the characters by which he is distinguished. For David, in his highest glory, could not be called the "Holy One," and the "mighty." Nor could he possibly possess those properties ascribed to the King of Zion. Nor did the ancient Jews, indeed, ever consider them as applicable to any but their expected deliverer. But had we any doubts remaining to whom they referred, the apostles Paul and John would remove them; for the one calls Christ the "first-born of every creature," (Coloss. i. 15,) and the other "King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 16.

The children singing songs of triumph before our Lord at his entrance into Jerusalem, which the Psalmist predicted, (Psalm viii.;) his persecutions by the princes of the earth, (Psalm ii. and lxix.;) the reproaches and sufferings sustained by his sacred person; the circumstances which attended his crucifixion; the soldiers piercing his side; the parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture; nay, the very words our Lord used in those trying moments, (Psalm xxii.) All these particulars, and many more to the same purpose,* which we find in the writings of this prophet, and which are either by our Lord himself, or his apostles, declared to refer to him, clearly imply a superiority of *his* nature whom they predicted.

But, above all, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, his ascension into heaven, and his possession of an eternal throne at the right hand of power; these are such predictions as, when explained by the corresponding events, can leave no room to doubt the GODHEAD of that person to whom they referred, and in whom they are all accomplished. When we hear, therefore,

* See 110th Psalm, and compare the 40th with the 10th chapter of Hebrews.

the royal prophet declaring the impossibility of the Messiah's seeing *corruption*, and find the apostle Peter applying this prophecy so expressly to Christ, in his first sermon after the descent of the Holy Ghost;* when again we read the magnificent description the prophet hath given of his "ascending up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men;" and see the whole verified in the day of our Lord's ascension, and his sending down the gifts of his Holy Spirit on his followers at the feast of Pentecost;† and when the prophet says of him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre;" and behold the very words quoted by an infallible expositor that cannot be mistaken, and without hesitation applied to him whom he calls "God's eternal Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:"‡ I would ask any candid and ingenuous mind, what possible ideas we can annex to such qualities but those which are divine? and therefore, what less than a divine being could the prophet have meant to predict in the promised Messiah?

From David let us pass on to Isaiah, who, from the great variety of events, as well as the striking particulars he hath spoken of, when sketching the outlines of the Messiah's character, is, by way of eminence, distinguished by the title of the Evangelical Prophet. Such, indeed, are the writings of this wonderful man on the subject of Christ's person and offices, that the most striking scenes of our Lord's passion are delineated by the prophet's pencil, with the same truth and exactness as if they had been drawn on the spot, when the secret volume of the divine decrees was unrolled, and when that which had been foreseen in vision was exhibited in reality.

The prophet begins his description of the person of

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* I stay not to quote the passages; compare Psalm xvi. with Acts ii.

† Compare Psalm lxviii. with Ephesians iv.

‡ Compare Psalm xlv. with Hebrews i.

the future Messiah with the nicest discrimination of character, when predicting his miraculous conception. "Behold (says he) a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." An angel hath testified the application of this prophecy in the person of Jesus, and an apostle hath recorded the fact itself of its being accomplished. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophets.*

In another chapter Isaiah again foretels the birth of the Messiah, and with such additional marks of divinity which he ascribes to him, as impress the mind with the fullest conviction of the greatness of his character to whom they belong. "Unto us (says he) a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful; Counsellor; The Mighty God; The Everlasting Father; The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," (Isaiah ix. 6.) What a cluster of attributes and titles of divinity is here! Although I believe there is not a single perfection belonging to the Father, but what, in one part or other of sacred Scripture, is equally applied to the Son, yet in this verse the incommunicable characters of GODHEAD shine out like a full constellation. The inspired writer appears to want words to denote "the fulness of him who filleth all in all," (Ephes. i. 23.) How could the prophet be so daring and presumptuous as to describe the Messiah under such great and eternal properties, if, after all, no more than a mere man was expected in him? Would he have said this of any, even of the highest and greatest of all created beings? Could such attributes, in the smallest degree, be applicable to any less than the Great Supreme? and what then were the expectations of the Jews, from the predictions of Isaiah, of the character of their Messiah?

* Compare Isaiah vii. 14, with Matthew i. 22.

The same prophet, after having enumerated those wonderful properties of the nature of the Messiah, goes on to mention other particulars, descriptive of his person and character. He foretels the herald which should usher in his approach, the name and title by which he should be proclaimed, the manner of his appearance, and the great events by which his life would be distinguished. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God." "Lift up thy voice, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isaiah xl. 3, 9.) "Behold, your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."* Observe these expressions, I beseech you, and then turn to the evangelist's history of the life of Jesus, and behold the correspondence of the prediction with the event! Recollect what the prophet hath said, that it was *their God* who was to come and save them, "when the eyes of the blind were opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;" and then view the blessed Redeemer of mankind going about the streets of Jerusalem, continually performing those gracious works of mercy, and referring the messengers of John the Baptist to those very actions, as proofs that he was the character predicted; and then determine what stronger proofs can be required of the divinity of his person, in whom all these properties were united.

Nor will the predictions of the other prophets concerning the Messiah be found less expressive of his nature and dignity, though they are not so diffuse and particular as those of David or Isaiah.

What less than a divine Being did Jeremiah teach the Jews to look for in their expected deliverer, when he declared the name by which he should be known was

* Compare Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6, with Matthew xl. 2—6.

the incommunicable name of the great Jehovah? "This is the name (says he) whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness," (Jer. xxiii. 6.) What character could the prophet Daniel expect he was to appear in, whom he describes as the "Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven; and to whom there was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; and whom all people and nations should serve, whose dominion was to be an everlasting dominion?" *

This prophet also, in a very particular manner, declares the precise time of the Messiah's appearing, and of his being cut off, together with the great end of his sacrificial merits and death; all which were literally fulfilled, according to his predictions, in the person of Christ: but I mention these things only as additional proofs, to whom the prophet evidently referred, from those corresponding circumstances.

The prophet Micah hath so clearly defined the person and character of our Lord, in that memorable prophecy which points to the very spot which was to give birth to the Redeemer, that no one who admits the prediction to have a reference to Jesus Christ, can hesitate in believing also that it ascribes deity to him whom it predicted. "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," (Micah v. 2.) If this passage can be supposed to have reference to the expected Messiah, and we have the testimony of the Scriptures in full proof of this opinion, (Matt. ii. 5, 6; John vii. 42,) it plainly follows, that this Messiah, whom the Jews were taught to look for, was a being possessed of an eternal nature, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

And if Haggai means any thing by that remarkable prophecy, that the glory of the latter house shall be

* Compare Daniel vii. 13, 14, with Matt. xxiv. 30.

greater than of the former, (Haggai ii. 6—9,) it could only be derived from the divinity of *his* presence, who appeared in it during his incarnation: for we read in Scripture, that the second temple was so far inferior to the first, that many of the priests and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of the second was laid before their eyes, "wept with a loud voice."*

But Zechariah hath yet more particularly defined the character of the expected Messiah, by the Spirit of prophecy with which he wrote, when he says, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee," (Zech. ii. 10, 11.) Here are evidently very discriminating marks by which the Messiah's character should be ascertained. He is called the *Lord*, and said to be sent by the *Lord of hosts:* by which the incommunicable name of Jehovah is equally applied both to the Father and to the Son. And to express this still more, in a subsequent part of his prophecy, he uses this remarkable language: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Our Lord himself hath so clearly explained this prophecy, that the sense and application of it cannot be doubted. And

* Ezra ii. 12. The Jews have themselves observed five distinguishing excellencies in the first temple, which the second wanted; namely, 1st. The Urim and Thummim, by which the high-priest received instructions in the will of God. 2dly. The ark of the covenant, from whence the voice of the Lord was heard. 3dly. The fire upon the altar, which came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. 4thly. The divine presence, manifested by a shining glory; and 5thly. The Spirit of prophecy. And, added to these, as the building of the *second* temple, in point of ornament and structure was, in the eyes of the people, as nothing in comparison with the *first;* how was the divine promise completed by filling this house with glory, according to the prophecy of Haggai, unless by the visible appearance of him to whom it was dedicated?

what then shall we conclude his nature to have been, who is called *fellow to the Lord of hosts?**

I will detain you with but one quotation more from the predictions of the prophets on this subject, and that is of Malachi, who lived about three hundred and fifty years before Christ's advent, and with whose prophecy the sacred volume of the Old Testament closes. "Behold, (says he) I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to HIS temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."† That this prophecy refers to the person of our Lord, and his harbinger John the Baptist, will not, I believe, be doubted. The question, then, arising from hence is, what less than a divine being were the Jews taught to look for, in one whose way his forerunner proclaimed to be "the way of the Lord;" and who, when he came, was to come as "the Lord to his temple?" How should it be called *his* temple unless he were the Lord of it; and to whom but God himself could a temple be dedicated?

Now, then, review these evidences, arising from the predictions of the prophets, coolly and impartially, and then say under what character the great Deliverer of Israel was to appear. If language may be at all depended upon, and the Holy Spirit which guided the prophet's pen be supposed free from error, no one truth can be more clearly revealed, nor any one fact more fully assured to us, than that the possession of divine attributes was to be the distinguishing feature of his nature and person. And how any man, in the face of those Scriptures, can be presumptuous enough decidedly to assert, that the Jews never looked for, nor were they taught to expect, any other than a man like themselves in their Messiah, is incredible indeed!

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* Compare Zechariah xiii. 7, with Matt. xxvi. 31, and Mark xiv. 27.

† Compare Malachi iii. 1, with Matt. iii. 1, *et seq.*

But though the prophets predicted the future Saviour under those great and eternal distinctions which could only belong to a divine Being, yet, they as expressly described certain characters and qualities at the same time, by which he should be known, and which as evidently demonstrated an human nature.

Though it was said of him, that he should be a Prince which should reign over all, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; though the Gentiles were to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising; yet no less was this desire of all nations, this Lord of his temple, to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he was to pour out his soul unto death; he was to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. When we saw him, there was nothing that we should desire him, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He was to be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; to be led as a lamb to the slaughter; to be taken from prison, and from judgment; and to be cut off out of the land of the living.

Predictions so seemingly contradictory in one and the same character, required somewhat more than human comprehension to unravel, before the events foretold were accomplished. Accordingly, the ancient Jews, unable to reconcile them, universally rejected the idea of a suffering Messiah, and fondly embraced that which flattered their notions of worldly greatness, by looking for a triumphant Saviour. But their ignorance and perpetual perversion of the Scriptures do not prevent more enlightened and dispassionate minds (and especially when enabled to judge from the events now in a great measure fulfilled) from seeing things in a different point of view. We perceive in those Scriptures clear and manifest declarations of the union of two distinct characters in one and the same person. The Messiah was evidently to be "Emmanuel, God with us," and no less a

" man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And well might the prophet, wrapt in the contemplation of so mysterious a character, declare his name should be called " Wonderful;" for, beheld in any light, either as God or man, or as God and man, he is altogether wonderful.

I have dwelt so largely in reciting the quotations from the prophets, to shew the specific marks of the *divine* nature by which the Messiah, it was said, should be distinguished, that I cannot trespass longer upon your time in more particularly selecting those which describe him under his manhood. On this point, indeed, it is less necessary to enlarge. They who differ from us in opinion respecting the divinity of our Lord, will not require proofs, I believe, of his humanity. I would only beg it may be remembered, therefore, that we are equally anxious with them to preserve the belief of Christ's human nature, as the doctrine of Scripture, and an essential article of salvation. While we glory in the gracious plan of redemption by Christ, that the Lord laid help " upon one that is mighty," and sent his Son " to be the Saviour of the world;" it is the peculiar joy also, and consolation of our hearts, that this blessed Redeemer, when he came upon this beneficent errand, " took not upon him the nature of angels, but was made like unto us in all things, yet without sin, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," (Heb. ii. 16, and iv. 15.)

I have now finished the single object proposed in this discourse, having selected a few of the most striking passages from the prophets (and I hope sufficient to the purpose), to shew what were the leading characters their Scriptures taught mankind to expect in the promised Messiah. And from these premises the fair conclusion deducible is obvious. As those unerring oracles of holy writ, penned under the immediate inspiration of God, have very clearly revealed, that an unity of nature, di-

vine and human, should constitute the expected Redeemer; if Jesus Christ be no more than man, he answers not to this prediction, and consequently is not the true Messiah. But if, in the person of our Lord, we evidently trace marks of this mysterious union, then have we confidence to conclude that he is the promised Saviour, "to whom give all the prophets witness," (Acts x. 43.)

With these discriminating characters in view, let us now direct our inquiry unto the gospel; and, under the gracious assistance of that blessed Spirit whom we humbly trust hath hitherto guided our researches, and will accompany our future progress through this subject; let us examine, and with the most scrupulous exactness, whether our Lord brought with him those infallible marks by which his claims to the person and offices of the Messiah should be ascertained and known.—But this, with divine permission, must be the subject of the next discourse.

SERMON V.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

In the prosecution of the important subject which hath requested your attention, I come now to those manifestations of Godhead which distinguished the person of Jesus during his incarnation.

The result of our inquiry in the preceding discourse, concerning the testimony of the prophets in their predictions of the Messiah, was found to be altogether descriptive of a great, but humble Saviour. Though it was the "God of Israel" that was to come and save them, when "the eyes of the blind were to be opened, and the tongue of the dumb to sing," (Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5, 6;) yet was he to be at the same time "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," (Isaiah liii.) Though the "Gentiles were to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising," (Isaiah lx. 3;) yet it was said of him, with no less truth, that "he should give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hide not his face from shame and spitting," Isaiah l. 6. This enigmatical prophecy, so apparently irreconcilable to the apprehensions of the human mind, was nevertheless literally fulfilled when Christ appeared upon the earth.

The mysterious union of our Lord's two natures, which the Evangelist declares in the words of the text, fully reconciles the seeming contradiction. Hence his

description of the person of Jesus. After having ascribed to him all the great and distinguishing characters of divinity; that he was "the Word which was from the beginning with God, and was God; that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made," (John i. 1, 2, 3;) he next subjoins the testimony of his incarnation: "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

With this description of the Messiah in our hand, we are now to enter upon that era, in which our blessed Lord made his appearance, when the minds of men were raised to the highest pitch in expectation of the coming Saviour.

The first object of my present discourse will be to examine (as was proposed) what correspondence the character of Jesus bears to the promised prediction, and whether our Lord brought with him those *criteria* by which the Messiah should be known.

At this season (the precise time the prophets had foretold) the angel Gabriel was sent to the city of Nazareth, to announce to a virgin called Mary, tidings of the miraculous conception: thus confirming and illustrating the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," God with us, Isaiah vii. 14.

The particulars of this wonderful embassy are thus related by the Evangelist: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God: and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son,

and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her," Luke i. 28—38. An event of so singular a nature requires somewhat more than ordinary proof to procure the conviction and belief of mankind. It is not by the testimony of the virgin herself, nor even the authority of the sacred historian, (though coming with all the evidences of divine inspiration) alone considered, that we can expect an hearty assent from the pride of the human understanding. There must be somewhat more than these to satisfy scrupulous minds. But when we find concurrent circumstances, and in such instances as defeat all suspicions of collusion or deceit; the correspondence of ancient prophecy with the accomplishment of the fact itself; the message of an angel, attested by the Spirit of God guiding the pen of the evangelist, and the whole illustrated by all the subsequent acts of the Redeemer's life; surely there ought to be no hesitation, with all modest and impartial persons, in receiving the truth of the miraculous conception as an article of religious belief.

As this, however, is so very important a point, in ascertaining the real dignity and character of our blessed Lord, and will best help us to form a true idea of the wonderful events with which his ministry was distin-

guished; you will not think it foreign to my present purpose, if I enter somewhat more particularly into the evidences of the miraculous conception.

The first circumstance worthy observation in proof of it, ariseth from the prediction of ancient prophecy. It was the express language of the prophet Isaiah, when predicting the advent of the Messiah, that he should be born of a virgin. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son;"* which words evidently implied a miraculous conception, even if the evangelist, who declares the incarnation of Jesus, had not noticed it. And that no possible misapprehension might arise from the application of this prophecy to the person of our Lord, we find that not only an angel was sent to the Virgin, to give her notice of this supernatural impregnation; but also a visional intimation was delivered to Joseph, her intended husband, in a dream, applying this very passage of the prophecy to the case of the Virgin, and declaring that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet," (Matthew i. 22.)

The second proof of the miraculous conception is the testimony of the sacred historian, who hath so circumstantially related it. The evangelist, St. Luke, independently of his inspired authority, deserves our attention the more from several weighty particulars with which he has prefaced his narration. He wrote the gospel, he says, purposely because he had a more "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," (relating to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ;) "and forasmuch as many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed among them, even those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to him also to write of the same," (Luke i. 1, 4.) And in this very chapter, in which he hath related the circumstances of the wonderful conception of Mary, he speaks of ano-

* Compare Isaiah vii. 14, with Luke i. 35, and Matt. i. 22.

ther angelic embassy to Zacharias, together with the event and completion of that mission: all which, had any of the facts mentioned been thought questionable, would have invalidated the rest, and rendered the whole history liable to contradiction; and the more so, as this is the first instance upon record of an immediate revelation, for more than three hundred years from the time the spirit of prophecy ceased with the last of the prophets, Malachi. So that in the relation of this sacred writer we have the strongest human testimony to prove the correspondence of the fact itself with the thing predicted.*

But, thirdly, The miraculous conception of Jesus derives its certainty, not only from the prediction of prophecy, and the corresponding event assured to us in the testimony of the sacred historian, but the necessity of the thing itself implies it, in order that Christ might answer the great end of his mission and character.

Notwithstanding some professors of Christianity are so exceedingly anxious to strip the gospel of its principal doctrine of atonement through the blood of Jesus; yet nothing can be more plain and evident than that the prophets, in their declarations of the future Saviour, foretold of a *suffering* Messiah, who should make his soul "an offering for sin," who was to be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; by whose stripes we should be healed, and on whom the Lord would lay the iniquity of us all," (Isaiah liii.) That when "the weeks were determined to anoint the Most Holy, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself," (Dan. ix. 24, *et seq.*) These plain predictions of the great

* I beg the reader to observe, that I have taken no notice of the *inspiration* with which the evangelist wrote his gospel, for on this supposition, all further argument would be unnecessary. I am now considering the evidence of his authority simply as an historian writing of a matter of fact, and even from hence I conceive the supernatural birth of our Lord to be fully proved.

objects to be accomplished by the sacrificial merits, and death of the Messiah, loudly proclaimed the expediency of a miraculous conception; for had this not been the case; had our Lord been born by the ordinary course of things, in consequence of Mary's marriage with her husband, partaking then of the common nature, which wa universally corrupt and fallen, the offering of himself as a pure and unblemished sacrifice for sin, would have been impossible; and hence the character of Christ, according to the predictions of the prophets, would have been defective in one of the most important offices of the Messiah: whereas, now, the sufferings and death of Jesus, so exactly corresponding to the Spirit of prophecy, become an additional evidence of our Lord's wonderful incarnation, and both confirm and illustrate each other.

But, lastly, What gives the finishing proof of the miraculous conception, is the wonderful events which followed in the Redeemer's life; for upon no other consideration can we reconcile many of the actions displayed by our Lord, but upon the supposition that he derived his being in a way different from the ordinary means of generation among men.

It would be a digression, in some sort, from the main object now before us, to enter into the detail of those actions of Christ, in order to establish this doctrine. And, indeed, the observations I have to make on them will more properly meet us in another part of this discourse, when I come to prove the GODHEAD of Jesus from his illustrious deeds, which every where proclaimed it. But all I would wish to remark at present is this; that when we find the account of the evangelist of the supernatural pregnancy of Mary, so minutely verifying the predictions of the prophets concerning the birth of the Messiah; and, again, this very circumstance leading to the accomplishment of an event, foretold as one of the distinguishing offices of the Messiah, by which alone the promised Saviour could become a proper sacrifice

for sin; and, lastly, when we behold, in the subsequent acts of our Lord's life, such a series of conduct as clearly and decidedly prove a nature superior to every former prophet or teacher; it is but reasonable to conclude, that his birth must have been miraculous, which was produced from the overshadowing power of the Highest, and evidently without the intervention of an human father.

Nor is there any thing incredible in the thing itself to those who will admit, what the angel declared to be the case, the interposition of divine energy in the operation of the Holy Ghost. And the very idea of a miracle pre-supposes this agency. Let us imagine only, what the most presumptuous sceptic cannot deny, that the same great power which created the first man from nothing, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, possesses the same ability to produce another man, without the natural means he hath appointed for the continuation of the species: on this supposition it will not appear more surprising that Christ should be born of a virgin, without an human father, than that Adam should be at first formed out of the dust of the ground. In both cases it is the exertion of a supernatural agency; and the very embassy of an angel, in the case of Mary's conception, implied some very important purpose, wherefore this singular event was to be accomplished. Those who are not already converts to the atheistical creed of the world's eternity, or ready to join the scoffers the apostle speaks of, who deride the promise of Christ's future coming to judgment, because they conceive "all things to continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Peter iii. 4,) must admit there was a time when man began to be: the birth of Jesus, therefore, is not the first instance of an immediate existence without the usual means.

Such are the evidences of the incarnation of our Lord; and I hope they will appear sufficiently conclu-

sive and satisfactory, to establish your hearts in the firm belief of this fundamental principle of the gospel, on the truth of which depend those important doctrines which peculiarly distinguish the Christian religion. Give up this article of your creed; say that Jesus is the son of Joseph, and you give up with it, at once, all the hopes of true believers. Then the great doctrine of atonement, and the cross of Christ, fall to the ground. That cross, which the apostle Paul so much gloried in, (Gal. vi. 14,) and concerning which he "determined to know nothing" beside, (1 Cor. ii. 2:) that cross which is the very seal and badge of our profession: that cross is rendered trifling and nugatory; "our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins," (Cor. xv. 17.)

It is not paying Christ the officious empty compliment that he was the greatest of all teachers and of prophets; this is but a poor recompence for robbing him of his most endearing character, the Redeemer of the world. That Christ was a teacher, come from God, and infinitely surpassing all that were before him, is too plain to be denied. We feel conviction of the divinity of his religion, by the purity of his doctrine. But, were these all the ends the Son of God came upon earth to accomplish, wretched would be still the hopes of fallen man. What more eminently recommends his gospel to our hearts, is the provision it makes for the most material wants of our nature, in "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," (Ephes. i. 7;) that he "made our peace through the blood of his cross," (Coloss. i. 20:) and that "if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins," (1 John ii. 1, 2.) These are the grand and essential points in our holy faith, and therefore let me beg of you, in terms equal to their importance, to pray for grace that you may remain firm and unshaken in the belief of them. Review, again and again, the evidences of the miraculous incarnation of Jesus. Behold

the spirit of prophecy, declaring, ages before it came to pass, the conception of the Virgin, and the birth of the Messiah. See the event exactly fulfilled at the time predicted, in the person of our Lord: and when you have fully impressed your mind with the proper conviction due to these undeniable testimonies, then go on, and attend to that wonderful train of conduct which followed in the life of Christ, discriminating him from every other being merely human; and then determine whether such an happy concurrence of circumstances does not clearly ascertain the real dignity and character of our blessed Master. You cannot but conclude with the prophet, that he was "Emmanuel, God with us;" or as the apostle emphatically called him, "God manifest in the flesh," (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

Convinced, then, that the birth of Jesus was miraculous, we no lŏnger wonder when we hear him asserting his relationship with the Father, and behold events in his life every way demonstrable of the GODHEAD of his person. Nor from being equally assured, at the same time, that he was of the "seed of the woman," (Gal. iv. 4,) are we astonished to find actions suitable to such an offspring. This union of our nature in the person of our Lord, serves to explain what otherwise would be unaccountable, and even contradictory. The prophets which described the Messiah under the greatest and most lofty distinctions, foretold also that "he should grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; that he had no form or comeliness, and when we should see him there was no beauty that we should desire him," (Isa. liii. 2.) Hence, therefore, when we read in the history of Jesus, that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit: that he increased in wisdom and in stature, (Luke ii. 52.); that he was subject to all the wants and infirmities of our nature; of *hunger*, and *thirst*, and *cold*, and *weariness;* was *afflicted* and *troubled in spirit;* was open to impressions of joy and sor-

row: in short, that he was a man, and felt as a man upon all occasions; let not these things stagger your faith in the GODHEAD of Jesus. Recollect that these are the very circumstances the prophets taught us to expect. The proofs of our Lord's humanity, when connected with the testimony of his divinity also, are no less proofs of his being the Messiah. This union of two natures is the very criterion of his character. Had Christ wanted this evidence, though coming in all the power of the Highest, and bringing with him every other credential of his being the Son of God, yet would he not have answered the description the prophets had given of the Messiah, unless, at the same time, he came as the Son of man.

The want of attending to those discriminating characters by which the Messiah was to be known, is the great, and perhaps the only cause of all that unhappy dissension in the church of Christ, concerning the real dignity of our blessed Redeemer. Alas! that ever Christians should have read the Scriptures with so little discernment, after Jesus "hath sent his angel to testify unto the churches, that he is both the root and the offspring of David," (Rev. xxii. 16.) As the *root*, his pre-existence proves his GODHEAD, and as the *offspring*, it effectually shews his humanity: and both together form the united qualities which were to constitute the Messiah. Whatever we meet with in the expressions of Christ or his apostles, when speaking of our Lord as a man, so far from lessening the Redeemer's character in our esteem, ought to confirm our faith the more; for it clearly and unequivocally proves him to be the Messiah, of whom these things are said. Did the sacred writers indeed represent him as a man *only*, and no more, the case would be different. He would then be deficient in one part of the character predicted, and consequently could not be the Messiah. But we have already seen how amply the servants of our Lord have borne testi-

mony to his GODHEAD;* and we as readily, and as cheerfully receive their testimony also to the proofs they give of his humanity; for it is from both we derive our assurance that Jesus is the Christ.

How mysterious soever this unity may appear in one and the same person, it is evident that the great end of our Redeemer's mission could not have been accomplished without it. And the question why so awful a dispensation became necessary for the purpose of our redemption as the incarnation of the Son of God, will only give rise to others of the like nature, which are easier asked than explained. In short, in this, as well as many other cases, we perceive that "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways," (Isa. lv. 8.) The "preaching of the cross," and "Christ crucified, was to the Jews of old a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" and so it will ever appear to the wisdom of this world; but as an apostle assures us, to "them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."†

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* See the Second Sermon.

† 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. The mysterious union of natures in the person of Jesus, besides the great object intended by it, that he might become "a sacrifice for sin;" was designed to answer another important purpose, namely, that he might be a *Mediator* at the right hand of power. The consideration of the Redeemer under this exalted character, is in my apprehension, so decisive an evidence, to the GODHEAD of his person, that I could wish it had been attended to in a more awakened manner, than I believe it hath been generally regarded. For my own part, I cannot possibly conceive, how Jesus can be thought competent to the character of a Mediator, unless he be supposed to possess those properties resulting from the union of the divine nature with the human, which can alone qualify to the performance of it. As this view of the subject is to me particularly striking, I hope the reader will indulge the desire of adding an observation upon it, and will give it also his particular attention.

The apostle Paul in his Epistle to Timothy hath observed, that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." And from hence the unbeliever in Christ's GODHEAD hath been led to suppose, that he hath discovered in this text somewhat to satisfy his mind, in his system of infidelity. But this idea altogether arises, from a misapprehension of the motive for which the apostle at

The events which followed in the life of Jesus, correspond with his miraculous incarnation. The myste-

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that time was so particular, in dwelling only on the *manhood* of Jesus. It should be remembered, that he was then speaking of the Redeemer in his *Mediatorial* character. And in that character, it was absolutely necessary, to mention expressly the human nature of Christ. It certainly was a point of much consequence, to recollect that the human, as well as the divine nature of Jesus, was employed in that endearing character. The apostle knew how apt the mind, in the contemplation of what is great, is prompted to overlook what is important; and while beholding the exalted Saviour at the right-hand of power, might forget the manhood in the GODHEAD. And as the recollection of Jesus in both natures became a matter inconceivably interesting to the soul, more particularly at those sacred seasons when approaching the throne of grace; the apostle hereby rendered the whole representation most gracious and accommodating, in reminding the faithful, that *that* Mediator, through whom alone they could draw nigh, was "the man Christ Jesus." As if he had said, 'When at any time from a deep sense of sin, and a conscious state of unworthiness, you feel the soul depressed, and kept back, from drawing nigh the mercy-seat; let the recollection of the Redeemer's personal experience of human infirmities give you encouragement.' 'He was in all points like as we are, sin only excepted.' But before any one presumes from hence to conclude that the apostle, by this express mention of the human nature of Jesus, meant to intimate, that he considered the man Christ Jesus as a man *only*; I would beg to refer him to a passage, in the same apostle's writings to the Galatians; and desire him to explain, upon the same principles, in what sense we are thus to accept the apostle's phrase, in relation to the person of Jesus. The passage I allude to is in the first chapter of that epistle: in which Paul is modestly asserting the authority of his commission, from the consideration of the manner in which he obtained it, and the dignity of him from whom it came. "I neither received it (says he) of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Here the subject is reversed. The human nature of Jesus is not noticed. Nay, if abstractedly considered, and without reference to any other part of the scripture by way of explanation, it is denied: for Paul says, he did not receive his commission from *man*, and yet he had it from Jesus Christ. But surely no one would suppose that the apostle meant it should be understood, that he denied the humanity of Jesus? From this comparative view of those texts of scripture, the reason seems sufficiently plain why in the one the apostle dwells so expressly on the *manhood*, and in the other intimates only the *Godhead* of Jesus: because it more immediately corresponded with his subject, and was directed to answer that point of doctrine which he had then in view before him.

But though I venture to think that this statement is very clear, and liable to no exception; yet I beg it may be understood, that it is not from hence only that I draw my conclusion. It is principally from the consideration of the character of a Mediator as it is in itself, and more

rious volume opens with " God manifest in the flesh," (1 Tim. iii. 16,) and every page in the sacred history car-

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especially when that character is performed by the Son of God, that I feel conviction of the GODHEAD of his person. And so perfectly clear and decided a point I confess it is to me, that I only wonder how any man can make it an article in his creed, to subscribe to the doctrine of Jesus as a Mediator, and yet suppose him not to possess one part of ability in the character, which is indispensable to the other.

The idea of *mediation,* is to reconcile parties who are in a state of variance. And the character of a *Mediator* is to accomplish this purpose. Hence therefore the very nature of the thing itself, presupposes in the person undertaking it, that he hath a perfect apprehension of the cause of dispute; a knowledge of the hearts and disposition of both parties; and that he possesses full powers and ability of compromising the difference. He must be what Job calls, " a days-man to lay his hand upon both," Job ix. 33. Even among men, amidst the little jarrings and animositics which spring up in life, no one is ever chosen as an umpire, to settle the point of contest by an arbitration, but who is supposed to be competent to the task, by the possession of these qualities. Apply then this reasoning to the case before us, and it must, I think, instantly strike every candid mind with full conviction, that in that awful breach which sin hath made in the enmity of our hearts to God, Jesus could not be a suitable mediator to bring about a reconciliation, unless he possessed the ability to enter into a perfect knowledge of the mind of both; and consequently therefore he must partake of the nature of both. Upon any other principles I confess I have no conception how the service cau be effected. How is it possible for Jesus to be the prevailing Mediator, which he is declared to be in the scripture, if he has not the qualities of mediation? Can he know the mind of both parties, unless by a participation of the nature of both? Could he lay his hand (as Job expresses it) upon God, uuless he is on an equality with God? Could he make up the quarrel between Beings so infinitely removed from each other as God and man, by proposing what might suit the honour of the former to accept, and what as man's representative the latter had to offer, unless he was perfectly acquainted with the mind of both? And could this be attained by any means short of what I am labouring to prove, that Christ partook of both natures? Let these points be but coolly and seriously considered, and I venture to persuade myself they will appear unanswerable and conclusive. I confess indeed the assumption of the manhood by the Redeemer, does not seem to have been so needful in order to qualify him to the character as Mediator; for the knowledge of our nature could not have been rendered more perfect by it, to the infinite mind of God. But this is not so immediate to my present argument. What I am chiefly, if not altogether contending for, is the expediency of the Godhead in union with the manhood, to render the person of Jesus competent to the character of a Mediator; and that Christ really possessed both. And so important I consider this point to be, so clearly proved, and so unanswerably certain, that I must

ries with it some evidence of the same mysterious subject. Did it come within the limits or design of my present plan, it would be easy to bring forward a great variety of circumstances of this kind, which occur in the evangelists. But this would necessarily lead me to be too diffuse, and particular. I must, therefore, adopt a method more comprehensive. And as I persuade myself I am now addressing a body of Christians, who are no strangers to our Lord's history, it will be sufficient to select such passages only in the life of Christ, as may be demonstrative of the great point in question.

It will answer every purpose, therefore, to shew, that there are certain particulars in the person of Christ, which set him at an infinite distance from the highest and most exalted characters among the sons of men,

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beg, again and again, to insist upon it, and with a warmth of expression proportioned to its infinite consequence; that unless Christ did actually unite in his sacred person the *divine* with the *human* nature, I cannot see in what sense he can be considered as a Mediator, or what value such a mediation can be to his people.

Whether these observations shall appear equally satisfactory to the reader, so as to silence every doubt, and remove every scruple, must be left to his determination, with whom ultimately all conviction rests. I sincerely pray God they may afford that comfort to the eye that now reads, which they have long given to him, whose frail hand now writes; and then he will find what a peculiarly refreshing and encouraging doctrine it is in a dark and trying hour. When the soul is smitten with a sense of guilt, and the conscious corruption of the heart, and the powerful suggestions of the great enemy of darkness, pour in all their united force to restrain from prayer; what a delightful consideration is it in such seasons to look up to the throne of grace, and contemplate in our great Mediator, one "who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities," and who at the same time hath power as a Prince with God to prevail! Think of it, my brother, I entreat you, upon every occasion, when drawing nigh the throne of grace, through that channel by which alone you can approach the throne through the mediation of Jesus; and in the recollection, may the Lord strengthen your hands and heart! That almighty Friend we have now in heaven, in whose hands all our high interests are placed, though once "a man of sorrows," was, and is, no less, at the same time, "one with the Father, over all God blessed for ever." And while you contemplate in his sacred person your own nature already in glory, never forget the purpose also for which he is gone before; that it is according to his own most blessed promise, "only to prepare a place for all his people, that where he is they may be also."

whether prophets, or teachers, which have ever appeared in the world. That from the first moment of his entrance on his public character, when a voice from heaven proclaimed the dignity of his person, to the last hour of his beneficial ministry; the miracles he performed; the language he assumed; the attributes he possessed; the titles by which he is every where distinguished in Scripture; that great and awful sacrifice of his death, which he himself declared to be the immediate purpose of his mission; the concluding scenes of his life; the solemn and magnificent events which followed his death; his glorious resurrection and ascension; the fulfilment of the promise he made to his followers before his departure, of sending down the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, and which he faithfully did; the assurance of his return again at the last day to judgment; and the expectation he taught mankind to entertain of a future and invisible world: such views of Christ (and they are but the mere outlines of a portrait which the evangelists have drawn, under divine assistance, of the Son of God) impress the mind with an awful idea of the greatness and sanctity of his character whom they represent, and justly render him the object of gratitude, adoration, and praise, to all generations of the Christian church.

To enter into a minute description of these particulars would require a separate discourse, or rather a series of discourses: either of which is inadmissible in the present work. I shall only beg your attention to such of the more prominent features of them, which appear in the life of Jesus, as may the best enable us to ascertain his real character. And among the evidences of this kind which I conceive necessary to bring forward in proof of his GODHEAD, the first place is due to that large and extensive chain of miracles which he performed; because our blessed Lord himself, upon all occasions, particularly referred to them, as carrying with them the fullest proof of a divine power in the unity he possessed with the Father.

Miracles, in confirmation of a doctrine, and as a sanction to the truth of what they are intended to testify, are not peculiar to the ministry of Jesus. Under the Old Testament, many servants of the Lord brought the same credentials with them. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, and others, are instances of this kind: they frequently appealed to the wonderful works they wrought, as proofs that what they said and did was by divine appointment. Hence, therefore, the miracles which our Lord performed, considered abstractedly, though surpassing both in greatness and in number whatever had preceded them, do not prove his divinity: but it is the *manner*, the *declarations* which accompanied them, and the *personal authority* by which they were performed; these are the circumstances which so eminently separate the works of Jesus from any former prophet, and draw a most striking distinction between them. Such, indeed, as might reasonably be supposed to form a line of discrimination between the actions of the Lord and those of his servants. They wrought wonders to display the glory of God; "Jesus (it is said) to manifest his own."*

Let us examine, in one or two particulars, the Scripture account of miracles, under this idea, for proof of what I am asserting.

The prophets and servants of the Lord invariably declared by whose authority, and in whose name they acted; and generally addressed God in a short and expressive prayer, suitable to the moment, when about to perform some supernatural operation. This is visible, more or less, through the whole Jewish history.† But with Christ matters were very differently conducted. It appears, that in all his mighty works, he was influenced by his own immediate will and authority. "Lord, (says

* "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory," (says St. John,) John ii. 11.

† See Exod. viii. 12, and ix. 29—33. Joshua x. 12. 1 Sam. xii. 18. 1 Kings xvii. 20, 21.

a leper to him) if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. I will; (says Jesus) be thou clean," (Matt. viii. 2.) Here was no previous application to heaven, but the disposition in our Lord was immediate, and the deed instantly followed. Of the same kind is the miracle of Christ raising the widow of Nain's son. It is said, that "when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." All this was done without any intimation that he wrought this by any other authority than his own, (Luke vii.)

And among those who had faith to be healed of their diseases, (which Christ was pleased sometimes to make the condition on which they should receive the benefit of his mercy) it should seem they entertained the belief that Christ possessed this ability inherent in *himself.* Hence the poor woman in the throng said, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole," (Mark v. 28.) And to the same purport the Centurion, "Speak the word only (says he to Christ,) and my servant shall be healed," (Matt. viii. 8.) In these and numberless instances of the same kind,* we hear not a word of Jesus acting by the power of his Father *only;* but from his own personal authority in conjunction with it.

In the case of the resurrection of Lazarus from the grave, our blessed Lord, indeed, used a short prayer, addressed to his Father, before he called him from the dead. But wherefore? Christ gave an immediate reason for it: "Because (says he) of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me," (John xi. 42); that is, by this evident communication, in the very moment of performing so illustrious an act as the raising of the dead, they might

* Such as the cleansing the ten lepers; the casting out devils, &c. &c.

believe, what Christ had before asserted, that all he did was in perfect unity with God; that what things soever the Father doeth, "these also doeth the Son likewise. The Father is in me (says Christ), and I in him; I and my Father are one." In the resurrection of Lazarus there is something so truly unequalled in our Lord's *manner*, both before he wrought the miracle, and at the time of performing it, that it hardly needs a reference to any other event in his history for the proof of his GODHEAD.

The solemn and authoritative discourse in which he proclaimed himself to be "the resurrection and the life;" and the miracle which immediately followed, an evidence, as it were, of the truth of his declaration; what *criteria* less than divinity could these be? We read in Scripture that prophets and messengers from God have occasionally been invested with ability to work events, truly miraculous, as the test of their commission. But what servant of Jehovah ever said of himself, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand?"* Can it be possible

* John x. 28. It hath been a stumbling-block to *infidels* and all *natural* unrenewed men, the different expressions used upon different occasions by our blessed LORD; as if there were a contradiction in them. Thus, as in this passage, "giving his sheep eternal life;" declaring himself to be "One with the Father," and the like; and yet elsewhere saying, "My Father is greater than I," (John xiv. 28.) But to a *spiritual* mind taught of God, there is nothing difficult of apprehension. In the unity and essence of the GODHEAD, there can be neither superiority, nor inferiority in one to another; for the GODHEAD is all One and the same; and in the distinction of Persons, each, and all, possess alike, all divine attributes and perfections. By keeping in remembrance, therefore, that in the Holy Trinity all are equal; it will follow, that whatever is spoken of one, which is not of another, of those divine Persons, that carries an idea with it of inferiority, can only refer to the distinct and separate acts wrought by each in the "covenant of grace." One of the sacred Persons in the GODHEAD graciously taking into union with himself that holy portion of our nature, and thereby becoming the surety of his church

for *eternal life* to be the gift of any but an *eternal Being?* There is something surely in these expressions, totally

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and people, became no less the servant of JEHOVAH in his Trinity of Persons, to fulfil the law for us; while the indwelling GODHEAD still preserved a perfect equality with the Father and the HOLY GHOST. And here is the key to open and explain every difficulty of this kind to be met with in the gospel.

I have often lamented to hear gracious souls at a loss to unriddle difficulties as they appear to their view; which are no riddles at all. And I have myself in times past, spent days, yea, weeks, to reconcile passages of Scripture, supposed to be foreign to each other, which never were at variance. Our LORD's explanation of that problem, John iii. 13, solves every other; and if I might venture to say as much, without offence, I would add, that the sole cause wherefore children taught of God, are ever entangled with difficulties of this kind is, when they lose sight of the Holy Trinity. For, if instead of having this always at the *bottom* of the whole transactions of the "covenant of grace," we take parts and portions of the "covenant of grace," and explain them according to our standard and reasoning of things, it cannot fail but different shades will be formed by such reasoning. For every *effect*, both in time and in eternity, there must have been a *cause*. The covenant of grace is the *effect* of that *cause*, which hath the pleasure, counsel, will of JEHOVAH, in his Trinity of Persons, for its origin before all worlds; in which each glorious Person took an equal part; and the whole three Persons, constituting One and the same undivided JEHOVAH, have come forward to the church in all those endeared and endearing acts of love, which shew the perfect love of each, and their equality in the possession of all divine attributes.

It is on this account, and with a view ever to keep in remembrance those divine standards of character in the HOLY THREE, which bear record in heaven, I never allow myself to speak of the sacred Persons which constitute One and the same GODHEAD, as *first*, or *second*, or *third*. I know that many of my brethren, both in the ministry and out of it, do so, and I presume not to impugn their judgment; for myself, I never do it. The very priority of term, I know not how it is, but so it is, naturally connects with the expression a precedency, or superiority; and as the HOLY GHOST hath furnished sacred names to these sacred Persons in his sacred Scriptures, I always confine myself to them. That declaration, 1 John v. 7, is beautiful, "For there are Three that bear record in heaven: the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST; and these Three are ONE." Whether I am correct in this I do not determine; but I certainly follow Scripture. For there is not a verse in the Bible which authorizes the LORD's people to call one *first*, or another *second*. The spiritual reader will do well to sit at the feet of Jesus at all times, and upon all occasions, for his divine teaching. In this twilight of being, the highest taught child of GOD seeth divine things only as through a glass darkly. Ere long we shall come to open day-light, "when we shall see Him as He is, and know, even as we are known."

different from the words of any former prophet, and extremely difficult to be accounted for, on the presumption that Jesus, upon all these occasions, though speaking personally, meant nothing more than a derived power from his Father. Would Christ (supposing him to be no more than man) have distinguished himself by such eternal attributes, and spoken so confidently of his own power, without continually qualifying the expression with a proper caution in what sense it was to be understood; that the whole was derivative, and that he himself was no more than the instrument of his Father? When we behold Christ, therefore, in this striking instance now under consideration, taking a title unknown before, calling himself "the resurrection and the life;" and immediately, in proof of it, bringing back a dead man from the grave, stopping the very principles of corruption in a lifeless mass, and causing him to re-assume animation: I cannot conceive such a manifestation of divine power to imply less than a divine agent; and as we justly infer omnipotence from the works of creation, so we may equally, in this instance, conclude it could only be the exertion of the same power in a resurrection: and both, we find, were wrought by the Son of God.

Compare now the actions of the most favoured servants of God, with the wonderful miracles of our divine Lord, and see whether, in a single instance, any of them were distinguished in this manner. Did ever any prophet assume a language like that of Jesus, or give the least reason to suppose, as Christ hath done, that it was by virtue of an intimate union with the Father his mighty works were all accomplished? Nay, do they not all of them expressly declare, that every thing they said or wrought was in the name of the Lord? This circumstance, I conceive to be particularly striking, and proper to be well attended to in our comparison of the miracles of Christ with those of the prophets; for it forms a manifest distinction between them, and such (as I before

observed), as may justly be supposed to discriminate the words and actions of the Lord from those of his servants.

But, besides this discrimination in the *manner* by which our Lord wrought his miracles, some of them were of that *nature* also, that they carry with them no possible resemblance to those of his servants.

When we read that "Jesus went about doing good, healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, (Matt. iv. 23;) that wheresoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole," (Mark vi. 56.) Wonderful as this description is, it gives but an imperfect idea of the greatness of Christ's character. But to have seen him casting out devils, bringing demoniacs instantly from a state of phrensy to perfect calmness and composure, the dead resuming life at his command, and the waves of the sea becoming still at his voice. Oh! could an infidel have been present at scenes of this nature, which the Son of God daily performed, or could any of those who allow the religion of Jesus to be a revelation from heaven, but yet deny the GODHEAD of him who gave it to us: could they, I say, but have beheld our glorious GOD thus continually exercising his power and authority, what irresistible conviction would have taken place in every mind!* How

* I have stated the above very strongly, on the supposition that men were open to conviction, and not steeled with prejudices, in a predetermination not to acknowledge the truth. Hence we read, that while *some*, at the resurrection of *Lazarus*, were overpowered with the contemplation of the mighty deed of CHRIST in raising him from the dead; *others*, who equally saw it, went their way to inform the Pharisees of it, and sought "the more to destroy Jesus?" John xi. 45, 46. But added to the predilection of the human mind by the fall, to disbelieve the record GOD hath given of his Son; there is another, and if possible a more powerful one, namely, the want of spiritual faculties, to apprehend the spiritual truths of GOD. I state this the rather, that if the reader be

admirably were the words of the Psalmist verified upon many of those occasions! "The waters saw thee, O God; the waters saw thee, and were afraid, the depths also were troubled," (Psalm lxxvii. 16.) "He ruleth both the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people," (Psalm lxv. 7.)

But chiefly, what raises Christ above all parallel, are the wonderful events which attended the concluding scenes of our Lord's ministry; for these are evidently to be classed among the miracles of Jesus. What unspeakable dignity must have appeared in the person of our Lord, when his presence struck to the ground the band of men and officers which came to apprehend him! What awful circumstances of a superior nature did his agony in the garden intimate! Above all, what unheard-of events were those which attended his death, when they wrought such an instantaneous conviction upon the most obdurate breasts! The prodigies which solemnized his last moments, darkness covering the whole land, the rending of the vail of the temple, the quaking of the earth, the opening of graves, even the bodies of men arising from their tombs, and appearing unto many; such convulsions of nature surely imply a superior dignity in his person, whose death they witnessed: and when viewed in connection with the magnificent scenes which followed his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the sending down the gifts of the Holy Ghost; these astonishing events altogether exalt our Lord above all comparison, and leave at an infinite distance, every

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spiritually taught, he may thankfully look at the source from whence that divine life originates, and bless God for distinguishing mercy. And he ought to know from that divine teaching, why it is, and how it is, he differs from another. Until we are regenerated from the *Adam* fall transgression, we have no spiritual faculties to apprehend divine things. What our glorious LORD said to the miserable man in torments, holds universally true in every other instance. The unawakened in trespasses and sins would not, yea, could not, "be persuaded though one rose from the dead," (Luke xvi. 31.)

worker of miracles, when mentioned with the Son of God.

And still further, as a discriminating mark in the miracles of Jesus, we find they were sometimes accompanied with the exertion of another proof of divine authority, namely, *the forgiveness of sins.* A power which our Lord's most inveterate enemies acknowledge could only be the prerogative of God; but which Christ assumed, and exercised repeatedly.

He pardoned *the Sinner* which washed his feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee, (Luke vii. 34, *et seq.*) He forgave *the Woman* who was taken in adultery, (John viii.) He cancelled the sins of the *penitent Thief* on the cross, in the moment of departure, and assured him of happiness, (Luke xxiii.) And the sins of the *Paralytic*, who was brought to him to be healed of his infirmity, he declared to be forgiven; and immediately wrought the cure on his body, as a confirmation of the mercy he had granted to his soul, (Mark ii.) Are these the deeds of a mere man? Was it ever known or ever heard that any prophet, any servant, or messenger from God, spake or acted in this manner? Would the meek and unassuming temper of Jesus have done this? Nay, would God himself have given a sanction to such usurpation? Surely that great and jealous Lord, who hath left upon everlasting record the most awful examples of his anger at the least encroachment upon his name or authority, would have checked the daring attempt, if Jesus had been no more than man, and thus made himself equal with God. He who caused the earth to open her mouth, and swallow up "Korah and his company," for presuming only to enter upon the priestly office, (Numb. xvi.) who made the hand of *Jeroboam* to wither for speaking rashly, (1 Kings xiii.) and struck *Uzzah* instantly dead for touching the ark, (2 Sam. vi.) would never have suffered such repeated instances of blasphemy to have escaped unpunished, much less have justified, and given

the most decided approbation to the whole, by honouring our Lord's cause with the continual operation of miracles. Nothing can more fully demonstrate the GODHEAD of our divine LORD: and the proof which Christ proposed to try it by, in the evidence of the cure he wrought on the cripple, was the clearest and most incontestable that could be desired. When, therefore, you find that the paralytic instantly arose at the command of Jesus, took up the bed whereon he lay, and went forth glorifying God, you will not hesitate to cry out with the centurion, who received his conviction at the foot of the cross, "Doubtless this is the Son of God."

But, lastly, the highest and finishing distinction of all, between Christ, and every other instructor of mankind, who performed miracles in confirmation of his commission, is the power which Jesus possessed and actually employed, of conferring on his disciples the ability of producing effects similar to those which he himself had wrought, as so many proofs that they derived their authority from him.

Even in the life-time of Christ, and before the Holy Ghost was imparted, this power was given to them. They were sent "to preach the gospel, and to heal the sick; to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, and cast out devils," (Matt. x. 8.) And when they returned with an account of the success of their embassy, they ascribed the whole to his personal name and authority. "Even the devils (they said) are subject to us through thy name." Upon which our blessed Lord made use of these remarkable expressions; "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven: Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you," (Luke x. 17—19.) And after our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the divine Spirit, the commission was enlarged to a still further extent of power, according to the promise of Jesus, that "not only the works which he

himself had done should they do, but greater works than these," (John xiv. 12.) But the same authority of the master was still preserved. "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," (Mark xvi. 18.) Thus the whole was to be accomplished in the name, and by the power of Christ. Hence we find, upon every occasion, the apostles working signs and wonders under this authority, which they had received from their Master. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," said Peter to the cripple, at the gate of the temple, (Acts iii. 6.) "Eneas (saith the same apostle), Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," (Acts ix. 34.) "Brother Saul (said Ananias), the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," (Acts ix. 17.) "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to come out of her," said Paul to the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, (Acts xvi. 18.) From all which instances it is evident the apostles considered the ability they possessed, to be derived immediately from him in whose name, and by whose authority they acted. And "his name, through faith in his name," (Acts iii. 16,) was the universal charm by which all their miracles were wrought.

Indeed, Peter, for himself and his brethren, solemnly declared, that the wonderful deeds which were performed by them were wholly to be ascribed to the power of Christ. "Why look ye (says he to the people, who were struck with admiration at the cure of the cripple in Solomon's porch), why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts iii. 12.) "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom

God raised from the dead, even by him, doth this man stand here before you whole," (Acts iv. 10.)

Now, then, review the whole of the argument in favour of our Lord's GODHEAD, as it arises from the miracles of Christ, and those of his apostles wrought in his name. Examine with the most rigid strictness the many instances of a supernatural power with which Jesus performed his mighty works, totally different from every servant of God, both in the *manner* by which they were accomplished, and in the *nature* of the miracles themselves. Consider also the additional testimony in the ability Jesus imparted to his disciples of doing the same wonderful deeds as he himself had wrought. And to the whole subjoin the peculiar evidence of the supreme power and authority Christ exercised in the forgiveness of sins, with which his miracles were not unfrequently accompanied, and which is, without all doubt, the highest and most finished proof of divinity; and then question whether it be possible to believe that any being, merely human, could possess such properties! Surely, if we would but view things coolly and dispassionately, there arises from hence such a strength of testimony, to prove the divinity of Jesus, as ought to carry conviction to every candid mind.

But the miracles of Jesus, and those wrought in his name by his servants the apostles, though they afford such incontestable evidences of his divinity, yet are they by no means the only proofs we meet with in the life of Christ of this important doctrine. The blessed Redeemer manifested others equally great and convincing. The *language* he assumed, and the *authoritative manner* in which he discoursed with his disciples upon many occasions; these are another species of testimony which clearly prove his nature to have been more than human. And when we discover also in his life, that he possessed *divine attributes*, and is distinguished by the sacred writings under *divine titles*, which are the well-known in-

communicable distinctions of the GODHEAD: when we behold these properties all uniting in the formation of his character, they cannot leave the mind in a moment's suspense whether he be not God, "in whom (as the apostle expresses it) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Colos. ii. 3.)

But the consideration of these, and other particulars yet remaining to be noticed in our Lord's character, would necessarily lead me beyond the usual limits. And it would be proper at present to relieve your attention. I desire, therefore, to leave you to the full impression of what hath been already said, with an humble supplication to the throne of grace, that the light of God's Holy Spirit may precede our steps in the paths of truth, and lead us to the full discovery of that knowledge which may make us wise unto salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON VI.

JOHN VII. 46.

Never man spake like this Man.

In tracing the accomplishment of prophecy concerning the Messiah, in the person of our most glorious Christ, the preceding discourse was principally intended to point out proofs of our blessed Lord's possessing that mysterious unity of nature which was predicted should constitute the Messiah's character. The evidences brought before you to substantiate the claim of Jesus to this distinguishing peculiarity, in demonstrating that his birth was altogether miraculous, were, I hope, convincing and unanswerable. And the subsequent events in our Lord's history (as far as we have yet proceeded in the subject) tended no less to prove that his nature was more than human. The testimony derived from the peculiar *manner* and *authority* by which Christ wrought his miracles, and imparted ability to his disciples in *his name* to perform theirs, carries with it (as I then observed to you) a species of evidence in support of his GODHEAD, which, I am sure, will appear more satisfactory the more it is attended to.

It was impossible in that discourse to comprise the whole of the arguments to this doctrine as they arise from the incidents in the life of Christ. I have now, therefore, reassumed the topic, in order to finish what was then unavoidably postponed; and to examine, with the same fairness and impartiality, the other testimonies on this subject which appear in our Lord's character.

The first to which I shall beg your attention is, that which is suggested in the words of the text; I mean the *unparalleled discourses* of Christ: for these certainly very highly express a peculiar dignity in his person.

Among the ancient prophets we can clearly discern the credentials of the commission by which they acted. The system of morality delivered by Moses was evidently a divine system; and, as far as it extended, differed in nothing from that of Jesus Christ. But it is not in the moral part of the gospel only we are to look for traces of our Lord's greatness of character, but in the whole scope and tendency of his religion taken altogether. The preceptive doctrines of Christianity are perhaps the least from whence we derive evidences of the divinity of its blessed Author. Much higher proofs abound from the peculiar and distinguishing points of his religion. His solemn assurances that the great purport of his embassy was to expiate the sins of our nature; the language he assumed when expressing this awful truth; the personal authority by which he proclaimed pardon to the penitent and faithful in this world, and happiness in that which is to come: the divine wisdom by which he uttered these, and the like doctrines, and the divine power by which he declared he would accomplish the whole of his designs, by "drawing all men unto him," (John xii. 32,) these are among the unequalled subjects of our Lord's discourses, which fully prove that "he spake as never man spake."

It will not be required of me that I should select from the gospel any particular passages to establish the truth of this observation. The fact itself will more fully appear by a reference to the New Testament. Let me beg of you to examine the words of Jesus by the severest test of criticism, and see whether it be possible to account, either for the *sum* and *substance* of what he taught, or the *manner* in which he delivered his doctrines to the world, upon any other supposition than of his being more

than man. I conceive the strongest evidence will result from this review of our Lord's discourses in favour of his GODHEAD, and it is such as will admit of the greatest stress being laid upon it.

All the former teachers of mankind in the will of God, delivered their message with a solemn declaration in whose name they came, "Thus saith the Lord:" but Jesus gives his precepts in a tone of personal authority. "Behold, I say unto you," is the usual form with which Christ prefaced his commandments. And his invitation to his people to embrace his gracious terms of salvation runs in the same style, as from himself. "Come unto me, (is the language made use of when calling them to his gospel) all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matt. xi. 28.) "If any one come unto me, I will in no wise cast him out," (John vi. 37.) Who among the prophets ever opened their commission in terms like these? Well might the people be astonished (as it is said they were) at his doctrine, for this was teaching, no doubt, "as one that had authority, and not as the Scribes," (Matt. vii. 29.)

But though this manner of speaking is so peculiar to our Lord, and very strongly marks the dignity of his person, yet these are but the slightest and most inconsiderable instances of the wisdom and spirit by which he spake. When Christ dwells upon the great and interesting doctrines of his gospel, his language rises to a much higher degree of sublimity. "And all bare him witness (the evangelist informs us) and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth," (Luke iv. 22.) What numberless proofs of this unequalled dignity do we find in every page of the gospel! "In this place is one greater than the temple," (Matt. xii. 6.) "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day," (Matt. viii. 1.) "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I shall give is

my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," (John vi. 51.) " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me (as the Scripture saith) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," (John vii. 37, 38.) When we trace through the whole tenor of our Lord's discourses a vein of language like this, and attested by a train of events equally great and mysterious; when we hear him also, declaring himself to be the *resurrection* and the *life*, and that he possesses the supreme power of *raising the dead*, and finally determining the fate of all the race of men; that " the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth," (John v. 28); and that the rewards of fidelity, and the punishments to disobedience, will wholly result from *his* determination: surely there is something in all this, which defines the character of the Son of God most perfectly, and draws an everlasting line of separation, between the person of Jesus and the highest of the sons of men. In short, let us only suppose the Divine Being was to descend from heaven, and to live and converse with mankind, as Christ did; what greater evidence could we desire, in proof of the greatness of his nature, than our Lord gave in the spirit and wisdom by which he daily spake? And whoever reads the discourses of our Lord as they are found in the gospel, fairly and candidly, and with an unprejudiced mind, will be frequently induced, during the perusal, to make the same observation which the Jewish officers did in the text, " Never man spake like this man."*

* However decisive to the great point in question, the evidence arising from our Lord's unequalled manner of speaking may be, in the outward ministry of the word; there is yet a much higher proof, arising from the same cause, which I pray God the reader may possess, for without the attainment of it, indeed, the other is nothing worth: I mean, when the inward effect of the words of Jesus is applied by the Holy Ghost to the heart of man. Men may assent to the great truths of the gospel, from the mere conviction of the understanding, without being at all interested in them as so many principles of conduct: and this, it is

The next argument in proof of our blessed Lord's Deity, arising from the circumstances of his life, may be taken from the divine *attributes* which he possessed. And as these are clearly among the peculiar character of GODHEAD, the only object I shall have to accomplish, will be to prove the certainty of the thing itself, that these properties were in the person of Jesus. Some of them, indeed, are so evident, that we can plainly discover them ourselves, in the words and actions of Christ; and others are so fully ascribed to him by the apostles and inspired writers, that there can be no hesitation in concluding that he possessed them. A few quotations from scripture will be sufficient to our purpose.

Omnipresence is so peculiar an attribute of GODHEAD, that our Lord's possessing this perfection would of itself be sufficient to determine the certainty of his

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to be apprehended, by what is daily manifested in the world, is the case of thousands; but this is perfectly a distinct thing from the operation of the voice of Jesus in the heart. "His sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out; they know his voice and follow him." Terms these, which evidently demonstrate, that there is somewhat more implied than the mere *outward* ministry of the word: and that an *inward* powerful effect accompanies it. They are *his sheep* which hear his voice; *them* he calls by *name;* speaking directly to their minds and consciences by a personal application; as in the case of *Paul* in the road to *Damascus*, when "they that were journeying with him saw indeed the light and were afraid, but heard not the voice of him that spake." They knew his voice by its effect. "I shall never forget thy word," (says David). And why? because, "by it thou hast quickened me." And hence the apostle Paul could tell the Thessalonians, that their election of God was known: because "our gospel" (says he) "came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." I cannot more effectually serve the reader, than in recommending him to an earnest and diligent enquiry after the evidence of these things. However, in the general, satisfied you may be of the GODHEAD of Jesus, from this proof of the unparalleled manner in which he spake; I am most awfully convinced, that you have not yet heard him to the great and effectual purposes of salvation, unless that voice which first commanded the light to shine out of darkness "hath shined in your heart to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Beg of God, therefore, for this unspeakable gift, and say in the language of the church, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it," (Song viii. 13.)

divine nature; for what less than an Infinite Being can fill infinite space? We shall require nothing more to substantiate the fact of our Lord's ubiquity than his own declarations. During the course of his ministry he had assured his disciples, that where "two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them," (Matthew xvii. 20.) "And if any man love me," (says Christ) "my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," (John xiv. 23.) And agreeably to this, in his last interview with the apostles, when he gave them his final commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he confirmed this assurance of his perpetual presence: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," (Matthew xxviii. 20.) Such proofs of the omnipresence of the Lord, and founded on his own solemn declarations, shew in what sense it is we are authorised to infer the GODHEAD of Jesus, from his possession of this peculiar and distinguishing attribute of the Godhead.*

* The perpetual presence of the LORD with his people, besides the testimony it carries with it of his GODHEAD, opens another source of divine consolation, to the church, in the perpetual manifestations the LORD gives to them of his presence; and when known and felt and lived upon, produceth in the spiritual mind, "a joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." Our adorable LORD promised this, before his return to glory, when assuring his disciples, that not only He himself would come, "but the FATHER would come, and make their abode with them: and the HOLY GHOST would abide with them for ever," (John xiv. 23, 16.) All the blissful events of communion which John speaks of, (1 John i. 1—4.) arise out of this. For as every *effect* must have a *cause;* so here, the effect of our joy, arises from this cause of the presence, and manifestation, of the HOLY THREE in ONE, agreeable to *John's* statement; "if we love Him, it is because he first loved us," (1 John iv. 19.) I glanced somewhat at this subject before, in the Preface; but the several acts of the gracious manifestation of the Holy Trinity to the Church; and the calling forth of the faith and affection of the Church in return; these are not only blessed attestations of the GODHEAD of CHRIST, in confirmation of his promises; but also open to such a precious communion, between the LORD and his people, as are among the highest felicities in a life of faith, as can only be exceeded in a life

Omnipresence necessarily includes another of the incommunicable perfections, namely, *Omniscience.* The

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of open vision in glory, that I make no apology for drawing my reader's attention to it in a short note.

It needs not be insisted upon by way of establishing the reality of the blessedness itself: that as JEHOVAH, in his Trinity of Persons, hath graciously condescended to make himself known unto his people by distinct acts of love by which each is personally revealed; so hath the LORD engaged under these distinctions of character to visit and make himself known unto them. Hence GOD our FATHER having himself chosen every one of them, and revealed himself as their FATHER in CHRIST; so he hath very blessedly said, that as this is to the adoption of children in CHRIST, they shall know him as their FATHER; and shall come to him as their FATHER; "the SPIRIT bearing witness with their spirits that they are children of God," (Jer. iii. 4, 19; Rom viii. 14.) Hence therefore, if by regeneration, I, or you, are conscious of this relationship, and spiritually feel our souls comforted under these precious assurances of GOD the FATHER's everlasting love: is it possible to live a day without the goings forth of the *spirit* in desires after and communion with our FATHER, whose very adoption of his Church is for this express purpose here in grace, and hereafter in glory? GOD our FATHER hath not simply chosen his Church, for heaven, or happiness in another world. He hath not adopted them for kingdoms or empires: but for Himself. "This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise," (Isaiah xliii. 21; Psalm iv. 3.) The same may be said, yea, and must be said, of each of the other glorious Persons in the GODHEAD, (Rev. iii. 20.) The whole book of the Songs, (1 Cor. vi. 19.) And let me not be thought harsh or unkind, for I mean it in the greatest affection, when I add, that among all the evidences of the renewed life, this is the highest and the best; namely, "fellowship with the FATHER and with his SON JESUS CHRIST," (1 John i. 3.) It is very blessed, to go to ordinances and the several means of grace, when led by the HOLY GHOST: Communion with the LORD's people when the savour of his presence is known, and felt, in the assembly, is also blessed: but there may be, and the best of the Lord's people will, I believe, be ready to confess, that sometimes, and not unfrequently, there are other causes, than singly with an eye to the LORD's glory, the LORD's people attend prayer-meetings and assemblies of a like nature. But for you, or me, to retire from all society of men to enjoy communion with GOD; here can be no delusion. Hence I venture to make conclusion, not unsimilar to what the HOLY GHOST commanded John the Baptist to make in his apprehension of the person of CHRIST. "He that sent me to baptize with water, (said John) the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the SPIRIT descending, and remaining on him, the same is He which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST. And I saw (said John) and bare record, that this is the SON of GOD," (John i. 31—34.) In humble imitation and under the same unction we may form a scriptural judgment of the true

continual presence of a Being uncircumscribed by space, and unlimited in operation, naturally implies his continual observation. And Jesus had given so many proofs of his possessing this faculty during his abode upon earth, that his disciples universally ascribed it to him upon all occasions. Our Lord perceived the woman in the throng who had touched him, (Matthew ix. 20.) He knew that *Lazarus* was dead before he proceeded to Bethany, (John xi. 14.) He knew the poor man at the pool of Bethesda, had been a long time labouring under his infirmity, (John v. 6.) He penetrated the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees, and beheld the scheme that was forming against him, and by his words intimidated them from putting it, at that time, into execution, (Luke xx. 26.) By a look only upon Peter, he convinced him that he knew of his denial; and by a word to his disciples, he intimated that he was no stranger to their intentions. In short, it would be tedious to enumerate all the instances we meet with in the Evangelists, in proof of our Lord's omniscience. It was the exercise of this perfection which wrought conviction in the heart of Nathaniel, that Jesus was the Messiah, and drew from him in consequence of it, that ever memorable confession, that Christ was the Son of God, and King of Israel, (John i. 49.) It was the same which made the apostle Peter cry out, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," (John xxi. 17.) And hence we hear the frequent observation in our Lord's history, that "Jesus knew their thoughts. He knew that they were desirous to ask him," and accordingly reasoned with them upon the subject, just as if they had communicated their sentiments. "He knew all men, (says St. John) and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in

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followers of the LORD. Where the HOLY GHOST hath descended and remaineth, and communion with the HOLY THREE in ONE is daily known and lived upon: here is the child of GOD!

man," (ii. 25.) Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at him, (John vi. 61.) He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him, (John xiii. 11.) Nothing can more fully prove a Divine Being possessing divine powers than such facts as these! Christ therefore gave this unequivocal testimony of himself during his abode upon earth; but the full display of this great attribute is reserved for that day when "the Lord will come to judgment, to bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and to make manifest the counsels of the heart."*

The eternity of the Son of God may, in a great measure, be inferred from what hath been already shown.† Both from his own declarations, and the character in which the sacred writers have considered him as the Creator, and Preserver of the universe, we have full authority to conclude that his goings forth were, as the prophet declared of him, from everlasting, for he

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* 1 Cor. iv. 5. To avoid prolixity I have not noticed in the body of the discourse, (what must ever be considered a very strong additional evidence of our Lord's GODHEAD) the prescience he manifested concerning future events. Some of them were of that nature, that, to all human apprehension, they were not only wonderful, but highly improbable. Not to dwell upon many incidents relating to himself which he foretold, I consider the destruction of Jerusalem, which our blessed Lord so exactly described, as one of the highest and most incontestible proofs of his possessing this divine attribute in its full extent. The destruction both of the city and the temple; the signs and wonders which should precede these events; the calamities which should ensue; the dispersion of the Jewish people; nay, the very ensigns of the nation, by whom the destruction was to be effected; all are related with a precision surpassing credibility, in a mind merely human, and can only be resolved into the infinite knowledge of him, to whose observation, the past, present, and future, are but as the same object. One part of this memorable prophecy of our Lord remains yet to be fulfilled. And the same prescience which predicted the dispersion of Israel, could not err in the assurance that they should again be gathered in. A day will come when "the Deliverer will arise from Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," (Rom. xi. 26.) May the Lord hasten this glorious event, and bring on that promised day of grace when "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation!" (Isaiah lx. 22.)

† See Sermon II.

" which had glory with the Father before the world," and " without whom was not any thing made that was made," must have been himself " without beginning of days, or end of life." But to put the matter beyond all dispute, our blessed Lord confirmed the whole when he appeared to his beloved apostle, in that glorious vision mentioned in the Book of the Revelations; and called himself by these divine titles, which can only be applied to an Eternal Being, " I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," (Rev. i. 8, 11.)

Immutability is another peculiar and distinguishing attribute of GODHEAD; and if the testimony of an apostle be valid, we cannot forbear ascribing it to the person of Christ. " Jesus Christ (says he) the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8.) Terms which need no explanation. The same apostle, in another place, speaking of the eternal and unchangeable nature of Christ, draws a striking contrast between him and his works. " Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; *they* shall perish, but *thou* remainest, and *they all* shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but *thou* art the same, and thy years shall not fail," (Heb. i. 10, *et seq.*) These are strong expressions of the immutability of the divine nature; and there can be no doubt to whom the whole refers, if we consult the original.

Omnipotency is another peculiar character of the Deity. And nothing can be more clearly applied to Christ. All the works of Creation, Providence, Grace, and Judgment, are declared to be his. As all things are said " to be made by him, so by him do all things consist." " He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." " He is able to subdue all things to himself." He it is, who is " full of grace and truth," out " of whose fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

The resurrection and the life, at "whose voice all that are in their graves will come forth," and by whose power all will be raised to judgment at the last day, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." His mighty angels! how fully descriptive of sovereignty and power! And who can behold such an assemblage of qualities uniting in the person of our glorious LORD, and constituting every idea we can form of omnipotence, and still question his claim to GODHEAD?

Holiness is so distinguished an attribute of the Godhead, that perhaps it is this, more eminently than any other, which draws the line of separation between the divine and human nature. And this is also ascribed to Jesus. He is not only called *Holy*, but by way of emphasis the *Holy One*, (Acts xiii. 35.) And the prophet Daniel, in describing the future events of the Messiah's kingdom, makes use of the same appellation, the *Most Holy*, (Dan. ix. 24.) In the Apocalypse, our blessed Lord is revealed under the same exalted character: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true," (Rev. iii. 7;) as if this phrase was applicable only to himself.

From the *attributes* let us pass on to examine the *names* by which Jesus Christ is no less distinguished in scripture, and we shall find the same invariable testimony arising from hence of his divinity. In short, both titles and attributes, and all the peculiar and distinguishing properties and perfections of the Godhead, which are in one part or other fully ascribed to the person of our Lord, all concur to justify his own assertion, when he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine," John xvi. 15.)

Some of the names and titles by which Christ is known in scripture, have been incidentally noticed in what hath been already offered. It will be the less

necessary, therefore, to be particular. I shall produce a few instances sufficient to answer the present purpose.

It is well known that the highest and most eminent distinction by which the Father is revealed in his holy word, is the incommunicable name of the great JEHOVAH. This, indeed, is so peculiarly his own, that it can be applicable to none but the self-existing and independent God. Now this very term we frequently find made use of when speaking of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the most part, the word *Jehovah* in the Old Testament is the same as *Lord* in the New. And had the original been preserved, this would have been more manifest. In the Old Testament, the great Jehovah is said to be the only Saviour over all the earth. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else; I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour," (Isa. lxv. 22, xliii. 11.) In the New Testament, the same character is preserved, and the correspondence shown. St. Peter explains this very passage of the prophet, and applies it to our blessed Lord, when he says, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

The prophet Jeremiah clearly defined the person of our Lord, when he proclaimed the Messiah under that distinguishing name, *Jehovah our Righteousness*. For Christ alone is *our Righteousness*, according to the apostle, and "wisdom, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. i. 30.) And the prophet Zechariah, when, speaking in the character of Jehovah, he says, "they shall look on him whom they have pierced," could mean no other than *him* whom the apostle John declared was pierced by the soldier on the cross, that this "scripture might be fulfilled.*

* Compare Zechariah xii. 10, with John xix. 37.

You will not expect me to enumerate all the passages with which the word of God abounds, in proof that the incommunicable name of the great Jehovah is frequently made use of when speaking of the person of our Lord. This would be unnecessary. I shall dismiss the consideration of it, therefore, with only observing, that when we behold this sacred distinction of the self-existent and uncreated Being, thus repeatedly, and without hesitation applied to Christ, nothing can more clearly imply his Godhead. For he " whose name is Jehovah (as the Psalmist justly observes,) can only be the Most High over all the earth," (Ps. lxxxiii. 18.) And when to this we add how exceedingly scrupulous the Jews were of using this hallowed name, lest they should incur the penalty threatened to the taking it in vain; it cannot be supposed the apostles, who were all of them Jews, and bred up in Jewish notions, would have been forward in ascribing it to our Lord, but upon the most perfect conviction of its being right. And, therefore, we may very safely adopt the words of the apostle Peter, " Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus which was crucified, both Lord and Christ," (Acts ii. 36.)

Another term of distinction by which our blessed Lord is frequently mentioned in scripture is that of *God*. The prophet, when declaring the advent of the Messiah, said, his name shall be called the " Mighty God," (Isa. ix. 6.) And the apostles of Christ have confirmed it. St. Paul calls Jesus the " Great God," (Tit. ii. 13.) " God our Saviour," (Tit. i. 3;) and " God over all, blessed for ever," (Rom. ix. 5.) And, speaking of *his* church, he declares it to be the church of the " living God," (1 Tim. iii. 15.) St. John, to the same amount, styles Christ the true God: " this is the true God, and eternal life," (1 John v. 20,) alluding, perhaps, to our Lord's account of himself, when he says, " I am the resurrection and the life." And St. Jude, in his epistle,

terms him "the only wise God our Saviour," and ascribes to him all divine honours. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and for ever," (Jude 25.) All which very strongly express the Godhead of him to whom they applied, and are such characters as cannot possibly be ascribed to any inferior being.

Nor are these all. Christ is yet further known in his holy word, under other titles of a like exalted nature. He is said to be "the Lord of glory, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," (1 Cor. ii. 8.) He is declared to be the "Lord of all," (Acts x. 36;) and St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius, and his company, called him by this name. But more particularly the beloved apostle hath left on record such testimonies of his divine LORD, in those revelations with which he was favoured, as leave no room to question the Godhead of his person. More than once he heard a voice proclaim him under that almighty character, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," (Rev. xvii. 14, 19, 26;) than which nothing can more fully shew his power and greatness. And it is remarkable that in the same chapter in which it is said, that "Jesus sent his angels to testify these things in the churches," it is also said, that it was "the Lord God of the Prophets that sent his angel;" a plain proof that "Jesus is the Lord God of the Prophets," (Rev. xxii. 6.)

And to sum up all, our blessed Lord closes the sacred canon of scripture with this testimony of himself: "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death," (Rev. xxii. 13.) This solemn declaration was made to the apostle by one whom he saw like the *Son of man*, the well-known character of our blessed Lord. Indeed, had the person not been specified, the words themselves

would clearly have ascertained to whom they belonged. None but Christ could have said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." And to leave the full impression of those glorious truths on the minds of the faithful, he repeats the same assurances of his eternity in the conclusion of the visions. "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." All which are parallel to the declarations God is pleased to make of himself, by his servant the prophet: "I am the First and the Last, and beside me there is no God," (Isa. xliv. 6.)

Now, then, consider the united evidence arising from the attributes and names by which Christ is every where distinguished in the holy scripture. We find the same, or equivalent phrases applied both to the Father and the Son, and from this equal participation of all the perfections of the Godhead what can we possibly infer less than the GODHEAD of Jesus? Is not this what Christ means, when he says to his Father, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine?" (John xvii. 10.)

Besides, is it possible for any man to believe the sacred writers would all have concurred in speaking of the person of Jesus under such eternal distinctions, by which alone the great Sovereign of the universe is known to his creatures, unless they had received the most perfect conviction of it? For it should be observed, that those attributes and titles of Jehovah are not ascribed to our Lord in one or two passages only, and of a doubtful nature; but in numberless instances, of the clearest and most obvious meaning, and scattered over every part of the apostolic writings. Supposing, then, it were possible to be mistaken in the application of any single part of our evidence, yet this ought not, it cannot, indeed, affect the whole. The clear proof of our Lord's possession of any one of the eternal perfections ascribed to him, must determine at once the certainty of his divinity. And to imagine that such a body of evidence

should arise in scripture, testifying as to a matter of fact what was yet questionable, would be childish in the extreme. It would be to suppose the sacred writers were either ignorant themselves of the real character of Jesus; or, what is, if possible, yet less to be believed, were perfectly indifferent what consequences might follow their testimony. Nay, more than this, that God himself should suffer a spirit of delusion and error to make its way into the church, instantly on its establishment, and continue its baneful influence through so many ages from the days of the apostles to the present hour; which is at once the most senseless, not to say ungodly idea that can be conceived. And yet the conclusion seems inevitable on the presumption that our Lord is not truly divine. In short, the evidences are so numerous and diversified, in support of this great article of our faith, that the want of belief is not to be accounted for on common principles, and can only be ascribed to what holy scripture hath stated: "If our Gospel be hid, (saith Paul) it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. I cannot prevail upon myself to close this view of the Redeemer, under those exalted characters, in the united testimony to his deity, from the attributes and appellations by which he is described in scripture, without subjoining a short note, by way of carrying additional conviction to any unbelieving reader into whose hands these feeble discourses may come; and also to point out what resources of comfort such views of Jesus ought to afford to all his faithful people.

I would first desire the man who hath not yet received sufficient evidences to satisfy his understanding of the divinity of Christ; but yet whose mind is not absolutely shut against *all* conviction, only coolly and dispassionately to review once more what hath been brought before him in the course of this Sermon, concerning our Lord's possession of all divine attributes, and those eternal distinctions of character by which he is known. Let him ask himself this single question, whether it be possible to suppose that a Being can be distinguished by such incommunicable properties, to be present at all times, and in all places, "upholding all things by the word of his power;" his *eye* unremittingly directed to take in with one comprehensive glance, every object both in heaven

But what raises the character of Jesus to the highest point of sublimity is, that important purpose which is declared by the sacred writers to be the great end and design of his mission; I mean, "the taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Heb. ix. 26.) This implies a superiority in his nature distinct from all former prophets or teachers of mankind, and which, from very evident causes, could never be accomplished by any being merely human. And hence the prophet, who proclaimed our Lord's approach, and became the herald of his appearance, pointed to Jesus under this remarkable character, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 36.)

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and in earth; his *ear* open to the numberless cries of all creatures; his *arm* stretched forth to support, restrain, protect, punish, and reward the various subjects of his providence: and all this to millions and millions of creatures, in one and the same moment; and yet all the while be a created being, or the delegated creature of another? Oh! the absurdity of modern infidelity! What contradictions will it not reconcile rather than bow down to the truth. Reader! whoever thou mayest be, who art tainted with this spirit, think, I charge you, before it be too late, how awful the case of those who die in unbelief. "If ye believe not that I am, (says Christ) ye shall die in your sins," (John viii. 24.) Grant, Lord, the power of believing! take away all hardness of heart from this people: open every blind eye; and unstop every deaf ear; that we may not be any longer "rebellious, or turn away backward."

But for you who are his believing people, contemplate, I charge you, in those gracious perfections of your Redeemer, what a rich provision you possess in Him for all you need. Recollect, moreover, that all the dispensations, both of providence and grace, are his. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground but by his appointment: nay, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. In his hands all your concerns are safe. "He hath the keys of David. He openeth, and no man shutteth: he shutteth and no man openeth." Oh! what an inexhaustible resource have all true believers in Christ, under every dispensation both of sorrow and of joy, in the perfections and merciful designs of their Redeemer! Keep up, I beseech you, an unceasing attention to him, ye that are his believing people, in all the events of life; and learn to make the same personal and practical application of all the chequered circumstances of a transient existence, which the apostle did for himself and his faithful companions in the gospel: "I am persuaded (says he) that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

It would be departing, in some measure, from the more immediate object of my discourse, to go over all the evidences we have in Scripture, respecting the great doctrine of atonement; and yet I cannot content myself without observing, that it is this, of all others, which peculiarly distinguishes the Christian faith.

Independent of all the authority we derive from holy writ, it is a fact which remains not now to be disputed, that forgiveness of sins has been the great object mankind in all ages have stood in need of; and sought after with the most anxious solicitude, to calm the fears of an awakened conscience, when smitten with the sense of guilt. The heathen world, long before the coming of Christ, had the most lively apprehensions of what sad consequences *might* follow the sins of this life, and studied by every mean in their power to prevent them. Hence they had recourse to every offering superstition could invent, to propitiate the offended Deity. The religion of the Jews partook much of the same nature. By expiatory sacrifices, they were led to hope some compensation was made for the breach of moral duties. And as these were of divine appointment, though the human mind could trace no affinity between the slaughter of a beast and the sin of a man, yet it seemed to soothe the conscience with the hope of pardon.

Now, whether or not what the apostle to the Hebrews hath asserted, will be admitted, that "these were shadows of good things to come, of which the substance was Christ," (Heb. x. 1, 9;) yet one thing is certain, this universal consent to expiatory sacrifices plainly shews the great anxiety of the world on this important point: and it is but a fair conclusion, that if God were pleased, in compassion to his sinful creatures, to make a further revelation of his will, after the many ineffectual attempts which had been made by his servants the prophets to bring mankind from ways of sin to paths of virtue; and that another more powerful messenger should come on

this grand embassy; he would at least satisfy the mind of man concerning the means of propitiation, and shew wherein the efficacy of the offerings appointed under the law did consist. For to suppose otherwise, by leaving mankind in the dark on this interesting topic, would be to suppose the gospel still defective in that part particularly, which most materially concerned the wants of our nature.

But if Christ came to teach a system of moral virtue only, and no more, alas! this had been done before. Moses had done it. Many prophets and righteous men had done it. But to what effect? It was not mere precept and example that could restore human nature to its original purity. Neither was it the calling upon sinners to return to the Lord, which gave them the power of returning. This would have been like bidding a man who was chained down to the earth with bars of the hardest iron, to burst asunder the bands of his own accord, and rise up and walk. Supposing, therefore, that Christ came only to answer this purpose, wherein did his commission differ, or in what point was it superior to that of Moses? And could it be an object worthy a messenger from heaven to deliver a law of righteousness which had been so ineffectually delivered more than a thousand years before, and to preach the same doctrines which had been so repeatedly preached in vain? Is it possible, that any man can seriously think that God would deal thus with his poor, fallen, and helpless creatures? Let reason answer the question (for to this great arbiter I here appeal for the decision), whether this would have been either to the honour of God or the advantage of man?

When you have duly pondered the force of this argument in favour of the great doctrine of atonement, go on and review the evidences for the fact itself.

The prophets had predicted, that "the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself: that he should

make his soul an offering for sin: that by his righteousness he should justify many, and bear their iniquities." In conformity to this, when our blessed Lord came into the world, he declared himself to be this very sacrifice, and that the end of his mission was for this express purpose. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."* And in his discourses he frequently made mention of his death, sometimes in a figurative way, and at other times more openly; but always as an event of the utmost importance to mankind, and as the great end of his ministry. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified: verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," (John xii. 24.) And as the time approached nearer, Christ expressed himself more openly concerning this great event. "Now is my soul troubled; and what? shall I say, Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour," (John xii. 27.) And when discoursing with his disciples at one time upon the interesting subject of his mission, he in plain terms declared to them, that his death was purposely appointed as a sacrifice for sin. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," (Matt. xx. 28.) To give his life a ransom for many! What could this imply, but that he was to be an expiatory offering? When do we find any moralist, any of the old prophets or messengers from God, talk in a language like this? Surely these expressions must evidently prove that some higher purpose than merely instructing mankind was included in the

* Compare John x. 11, with Isaiah liii. and Dan. ix. 26.

inistry of Jesus, and that his death was more particu-
arly to be considered also in the nature of an oblation
nd atonement for sin!

Nor is this all the evidence that Christ gave respect-
ng this doctrine. The institution of that solemn supper
hich he appointed as a standing ordinance in his
hurch, implied the importance of the object it was in-
ended to perpetuate. The bread which was to be
roken, and the cup to be poured forth, were altoge-
her emblems void of meaning, if the death of Jesus be
onsidered in the light of a martyr only to his cause.
But viewed as the memorial of an oblation for sin, they
hen become apt and significant representations of his
ody, which was broken, and his blood, which was shed,
or "the sins of the world." And hence the apostle
ustly reasons, "the bread which we break, is it not the
ommunion of the body of Christ? The cup of blessing
hich we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of
Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) The communion of the body and
lood of Christ is a strong expression, and clearly intends
omething more than the commemoration of his death.
To have a full idea of it, let us only suppose it had been
aid of any of the apostles, that, in a service of this kind,
t was called the communion of *their* body and blood!
nd the ungodliness of the application will be imme-
iately glaring.

But it is not only on the authority of Christ himself,
reat and unquestionable as that authority ought to be,
hat we ground the certainty of this doctrine. The
postles, also, after their being endued with the influence
f the Divine Spirit, in all their discourses inculcate the
ame thing. The writings of those inspired men abound
ith phrases of the plainest kind in proof of it. One
ssures us, that Christ "died for our sins according to
he Scriptures," (1 Cor. xv. 3;) that "we have redemp-
on through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,"
Ephes. i. 7;) that "he made our peace through the

blood of his cross," (Coloss. i. 20;) and that "he gave himself a ransom for all," (1 Tim. ii. 6.) Another declares, that "Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree," (1 Pet. ii. 24;) that "we are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot," (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) A third proclaims, that it is "the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sins," (1 John i. 7;) and that "he is the propitiation for our sins," (1 John ii. 2.) And all concur in asserting, that the great end of our Lord's coming was, to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Are all these mere words without meaning? If so, how comes it to pass that such things should be said of Jesus only, and not of any former messenger of God? Do we discover any expressions of a similar tendency in any of the writings of the prophets? Was it ever said of Moses or Elijah, or any other holy servant of God, that they took away sin by the sacrifice of themselves?

And, as if all these were not sufficient to confirm the certainty of the doctrine, it is further remarkable, that when the apostle John, in a vision, saw heaven opened, and heard the acclamations of the happy multitude; this, he tells us, was the universal chorus of praise and thanksgiving, which he heard, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," (Rev. v. 9.) All which, if language can be depended upon, decidedly prove, that the first and leading principle of the gospel, is the atoning blood of its blessed Author. And it is not without the strongest evidences we conclude, that Christ is to us a sacrifice for sin, as well as an example of a godly life. But I pursue this reasoning no further. Suffer me only to assume the possibility of the fact itself, that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ," (Heb. x. 10,) and the superiority of his nature must immediately be admitted. For to give efficacy to that oblation, it became expedient that

he should be "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," (Heb. vii. 16,) and in every way untainted with the pollution of that fallen race whose guilt he suffered to expiate. And hence, therefore, must be inferred the GODHEAD of his person.

The evidences in proof of this important doctrine, which arise from the last scenes of our Lord's history, though carrying with them a peculiar energy, are of a nature much easier to be conceived than expressed. In the plain and unaffected narrative of the Evangelists, it is impossible, under grace, not to feel their impression. The awful signs which they relate as accompanying the death of Jesus, and the glorious manifestation which attended his resurrection and ascension; altogether proclaim a dignity in the person of our Lord, infinitely transcending all ideas of a being merely human; especially when it is considered that Christ had foretold every remarkable circumstance which distinguished those events. He had declared, indeed, not only that his death was voluntary, but that his resurrection should be the result of his own immediate power. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again," (John x. 18.) "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself. And as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John v. 20, 21.) And hence it was that Christ said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake" (the Evangelist tells us) "of the temple of his body. When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this unto them," (John ii. 19, *et seq.*)

But on these topics I forbear to enlarge. They possess an energy in the words of the Evangelists perfectly inimitable, and which cannot but suffer under a representation from all other pens.

One evidence, however, of Christ's GODHEAD resulting from the view of the conclusive scenes of our Lord's life, is so very pointed, that I venture to propose it to your more particular consideration; namely, the unequalled dignity which they have given to our Lord's person and manner, during his last interview with his apostles; and the authority with which he delivered to them his final commission.

"He had shewn himself alive to them after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them for forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," (Acts i. 3); and having "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures," and shewed them the expediency on which it was founded, that "thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day," (Luke xxiv. 45, 46;) he now proceeded to deliver to them that commission which involved in it all the great events of his church. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 18, *et seq.*) "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) "And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy," (Luke xxiv. 50.) "And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark xvi. 20.) What grandeur

and sublimity are there in these words! What a concurrence of circumstances to illustrate and prove the divinity of our blessed Lord! With an authority unequalled he dismisses his humble followers to the arduous enterprise of the conversion of a world, assuring them at the same time of his continual presence! And in the proof of the high commission under which they acted, they were to carry the fullest evidences with them of his divine power. In *his* name they were to cast out devils, and perform all their mighty works. And accordingly, when they went forth upon their employment, it is said, "the Lord was working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Are not these very high demonstrations of the GODHEAD of Jesus? Did ever any character among the sons of men assume a language like this? or had ever any one his pretensions justified by the correspondence of events so singular? I ask not what prophet or messenger of God acted in this manner; but I demand, what angel from heaven ever claimed such distinctions, or mentioned his own name as the efficient cause of his ministry?

But this is not all. The apostles before they proceeded to preach the Gospel, were to receive supernatural assistance to qualify them for the work in the descent of the Holy Ghost; and even this, Jesus declared, should be his own immediate gift. When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceeded from the Father, he shall testify of me," (John xv. 26.) "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he should take of mine, and shew it unto you, (John xiv. 13, *et seq.*) Is it possible to hear these things, and still question the GODHEAD of him by whom such declarations are made? That Christ

should say of the blessed Spirit "which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," (1 Cor. 10,) and whom "to speak a word against is pronounced to be unpardonable sin," (Matt. xii. 32); "that when the Comforter is come whom I will send, he shall not speak of himself, but he shall receive of *mine*, and shew it unto you!" Can we conceive it possible that any being less than the great Supreme should talk thus freely of the Holy Spirit? And that the Holy Spirit should actually descend upon the minds of the apostles in perfect conformity to those declarations of Jesus?

Nay, more. The form of baptism which our Lord appointed for the introduction of converts into the Gospel-covenant, and which is become the grand charter of the church, is yet, if possible, more difficult to be accounted for upon the supposition that his GODHEAD be denied. When Christ sent his disciples into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, the command was, "baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xxviii. 19.) In which form Jesus classes himself in priority of rank, before the Eternal Spirit, and separates, as it were, between the Father and the Holy Ghost. Was this without design, and without meaning? Had our Lord no object in view in doing it? I should suppose this impossible. And what then are we to conclude, that any created being, however high or exalted, would be so presumptuous as to place himself on a level with the Father, and the Divine Spirit? What could be more blasphemous, or derogatory from the honour of God! Surely the advocates for the simple humanity of Jesus must, upon their own principles, suppose that our blessed Lord far exceeded his commission by thus encroaching upon the divine prerogatives; for it is impossible to assign any reason for his assuming this equality, unless it were his right. And, for my own part, I cannot but observe, that this form of baptism, (which is evidently the solemn

dedication of Christians to God in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) would of itself be more than half conviction with me of the divinity of our blessed Master, even if unsupported by the other direct testimonies of holy Scripture.*

One point more remains yet to be considered, by which the dignity of the great Author of the Christian faith is clearly ascertained, namely, the supreme character in which he is to appear as the Judge of the world.

The Scriptures have so fully and plainly revealed the doctrine of a future judgment and a day of account, that it forms a part of every man's creed, and is the common object of universal expectation. That our blessed Lord is to preside at this awful tribunal, is an opinion also in which all Christians are agreed, though

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* The form of baptism, if considered with all its attending circumstances, carries with it a peculiar evidence in proof of the GODHEAD of our Lord. The great Author of our faith had lately suffered death upon the cross, for the *supposed* blasphemy of calling himself the Son of God. In this solemn interval of his resurrection and ascension, when he was delivering his final commission to his disciples, concerning the future events of his church, and at the time when he had received "all power in heaven and in earth;" can it be supposed that if any misconception had been taken, either of his person or doctrine, from what himself had taught, he would not have embraced this favourable season for correcting their error? More particularly in so momentous a point, as that of entertaining right notions of his person and character, would he have left them in ignorance whether he was really and truly what he had all along professed himself to be, the Son of God, and for which he had suffered death, or had assumed this title only by way of distinction of character? Instead of this, or any explanation to a similar effect, what are our Lord's final declarations? Truly, the fullest confirmation of his "unity with his Father," in the appointment of a solemn service by which the converts to the faith were to be initiated into the Christian communion, in the joint name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; what conclusion can possibly be made of it, but an equal participation of GODHEAD? When we recollect the numerous passages of Scripture, which ascribe divinity to each of the sacred persons of the Godhead, and then behold Christ in the instance before us, as enjoining all his followers to be baptized in the equal profession of this faith, from which no tribulation whatever was deemed to be a sufficient justification for receding; the appointment and form of this service become, I conceive, a very decisive evidence of the great point in question.

the divinity of his person is by some rejected. But certainly the exercise of supreme authority but ill corresponds with the notion of a subordinate being. The very description which the sacred writers have given of this "great day of the Lord," is enough to impress the mind with the fullest conviction that there must be somewhat truly divine in his person and character, who possesses a sovereignty so supreme. When we read, that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with *His* mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," (Thess. i. 7); that "he cometh with ten thousand of *His* saints, to execute judgment upon all," (Jude 15); and that "the very heavens and earth will flee away from the face of *Him* who sitteth upon the throne," (Rev. xx. 11.) Are these things credible upon the supposition that Christ is no more, after all, than an human being? Is the belief of it consistent with principles of common sense?

Again, our blessed Lord, in his predictions of this day, declared that "all who are in their graves should hear his voice and come forth;" but is it to be the voice of a glorified man which is to effect this? to rouse the dead, to re-animate the lifeless mass of dust and ashes, and to abolish for ever the empire of death and the grave? Can this be really possible? But what is still more astonishing, (and which the rejecters of our Lord's GODHEAD must receive with unreserved conviction,) is the opinion, that this man, Christ Jesus, in consequence of his exaltation, possesses such an intimate knowledge of the human heart, with the infinite circumstances and transactions of life, as to be able to determine the exact measure of duty or disobedience in every man's conduct; and can draw the line of strict justice with the nicest hand, so as to ascertain the rewards and punishments due to every individual of the innumerable race of Adam. Can any one seriously and coolly adopt this opinion?

Let us for a moment, however, pass the boundaries of probability, and in opposition to the numberless obstructions in the way, let it be admitted. Now, then, we reduce in idea the great Judge of all the earth to the humble standard of humanity. But even here again a new difficulty arises. To what cause can we reasonably ascribe this wonderful exaltation? What was there in the life of Jesus, simply considered as a man, which merited this astonishing accession to the right-hand of power, to be the Judge of quick and dead, and to determine the everlasting fate of millions? I speak with all possible reverence, and even with a religious apprehension upon my mind, while proposing questions of this bold nature. But surely, it could never be merely for preaching a system of moral virtue, or being a pattern of the most perfect righteousness, much less for dying as a martyr to his cause, and sealing the testimony of his doctrine with his blood. These are very inadequate causes, wherefore "a name should be given to him which is above every name," (Philip. ii. 9.) Great as these characters are in themselves, and surpassing all comparison with those of the highest and best of men, yet is there no proportion between the merit and the reward: it is without parallel, in all the dispensations of Providence that have ever been revealed to mankind.

But now, consider the subject in another point of view. Suppose this spotless preacher and example of righteousness, to be literally and truly what the sacred writers have declared him to be, the Son of God, and possessed, as himself hath assured us, of "glory with his Father before the world;" then, for the purposes of our salvation, and in mercy to a fallen race, conceive him descended from this state of felicity, clothed in a body of flesh, in that form offered a sacrifice upon the cross for human guilt; and, having accomplished this important end, suppose him returned to his original glory, whence he will come again at the last day, agreeably to

his promise, to judge the subjects of his moral government.

Beheld in this light, nothing appears disproportioned in the Gospel dispensation; but one uniform scheme of infinite wisdom, blended with justice and mercy. The strictest propriety is visible in *his* being the Judge of mankind, who hath been their Creator and Redeemer. And though, no doubt, the highest mystery is veiled under a dispensation so awful, yet we see enough to admire, and in that admiration to adore, the gracious ordination of heaven in this last, best, and *unspeakable gift*, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

What true believer, in a review of those proofs of divine love, can refrain from joining the apostle in his animated exclamation: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33—36.)

SERMON VII.

MATTHEW XVI. 15.

But whom say ye that I am?

THE numerous and unexceptionable evidences of scripture in favour of our Lord's GODHEAD, have now, in a very circumstantial manner, been brought before you. The subject has been traced through the whole of the sacred writings, (and I hope free from prepossession or partiality) in order to ascertain the real character of our glorious GOD and Saviour! And I would willingly persuade myself, that the result of the inquiry hath terminated in impressing your mind with the clearest conviction that *Jesus* is the *Son of God.*

To these testimonies there seems nothing further necessary to be added, except it be the opinion of the first and immediate followers of Christ, his apostles. It becomes, indeed, a very material and important question, in the final decision of the whole argument, to inquire what were the sentiments of these holy and inspired men upon the subject. For their opinion is of the greatest consequence, and must carry with it considerable weight with every candid mind. And if it can be shewn (as I think it may without much difficulty) that they entertained a perfect persuasion of the GODHEAD of Jesus, I should apprehend there ought to be no hesitation in adopting their sentiments and taking them for our pattern, in subscribing to this great article of our faith.

That it was the *general* opinion of those faithful servants of Christ, (as far as we are able to gather from their words or writings,) hath been, in a great measure,

proved from the occasional quotations which, in the course of these Sermons, have been already made. But on a point of so much consequence, it may not be amiss to examine, somewhat more distinctly, the *particular* opinion of each of them.

The investigation of this subject will require your present attention.

The question in the text appears to me to be the most suitable to this purpose; "But whom say ye that I am?" It was originally proposed by our Lord himself to his disciples on this very point. Whether Christ intended it altogether for the trial of their faith, or whether he meant that their opinion might become the standard and guide to succeeding ages of the church on this grand question, I shall not determine; yet I cannot but think there is something very remarkable, both in the manner of our Lord's interrogating his disciples upon it, and the observations he made in consequence of Peter's answer. For, after Christ had gathered from them the general sentiments of mankind concerning his person and character, he then desired to know, what was *their* opinion upon the subject. When *Simon Peter*, for himself and his brethren, said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" had we any doubts what the apostle meant by this expression, the observations which our Lord made upon Peter's answer would immediately remove them, by determining the sense in which he considered it. "Blessed (says Christ) art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If Peter meant nothing more by these words, than that he and his fellow-apostles considered Jesus as a *servant*, or *messenger* from God; surely Christ would not have pronounced him to be blessed for the confession; for multitudes, who knew but little of our Lord's character, more than from seeing the miracles he daily wrought, confessed the same thing. "A great prophet (say they)

is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people," (Luke vii. 16.) Neither would the discovery have been so very remarkable and important, that flesh and blood could not have attained to it, but it must have proceeded from the immediate revelation of God, if, at the same time, it amounted to nothing higher than the belief that Christ was simply a *man*, and differed not from any former prophet, except in the extent of his commission. To me, I confess, it appears one of the plainest propositions possible, that Peter (and of consequence his fellow apostles with him,) intended by the expression to profess his belief that our Lord was a being of that superlative nature, and so intimately united to God, as to be his *Son;* and that Christ considered the apostle's words in this sense, and pronounced a blessing upon him for the profession of such a faith.*

This passage serves to give us some idea of the *general* opinion of the apostles concerning the person and character of their blessed Master. But the object I proposed from the present discourse was, to learn (as far at least as the holy Scriptures can inform us) what was the *particular* sentiment of each of them on this momentous point, separately and individually.

Before I proceed to this, however, it may be proper to premise a few words respecting the validity of their opinion.

When we consider the number, the situation, and the character of the apostles, it is impossible to suppose that they could be under the influence of a delusion

* There is somewhat so very gracious in those divine words of the LORD JESUS to Peter; namely, that the revelation of the Person and GODHEAD of CHRIST could not be the effect of human power in all its highest efforts; and only from the FATHER; that I cannot but beg the reader to ponder them well. And when we see in life, as that we daily do, men of the first abilities in human arts and sciences, alive to the quickest apprehension in all earthly concerns; but as blind as beetles, if you only touch on spiritual concerns; what a confirmation doth this daily give to our LORD'S words! Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being taught of GOD! (Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 45.)

themselves, or capable of joining in a confederacy, with a view to delude others.

The humble prospects of Christ's religion favoured no such idea, nor was there any object they could have proposed to themselves to have been answered by it. They had, no doubt, at the first, in common with their countrymen the Jews, many prejudices to vanquish previous to their becoming sincere believers in our Lord's character as the Messiah. And we find it was necessary that evidences, again and again, should be brought before them to accomplish this purpose. Therefore, the establishment of their own conviction became necessary, before they could be supposed qualified to attempt the conviction of others. So that when we hear one of them declare, that the truth of the facts they delivered was, "what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the word of life," (John i. 1,) we may very safely conclude, that as they could have no inducement whatever to deceive the world, so neither is it credible that they could have been deceived themselves.

But this is not all. Their opinion is still more highly deserving our reverence and regard, from the supernatural assistance which they are well known to have received, in order to qualify them as witnesses of the great truths of the gospel.

The promise of this divine aid was given to them by Christ himself before his departure. And it was declared by him, among other purposes, to be one grand reason for which he left the world, that he might "send them the blessed Spirit of truth, which should guide them into all truth," (John xvi. 13.) But indeed, not only from the authority of Scripture do we derive the testimony of the inspiration of the apostles, but our reason confirms the certainty of it, by the strongest evidence. For how should a few poor, ignorant fishermen of Galilee, dull, and unlearned even to a proverb, as

they were, undertake upon their own strength, the arduous enterprise of converting a world to the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer? If we consider them, indeed, as endued with power from on high, every difficulty at once vanishes. Supported by this divine aid, all opposition must fall before them; and their testimony thereby, becomes the greatest and most convincing that is possible. That divine *Spirit of truth*, which was promised "to guide them into all truth," would not, we may be assured, leave them ignorant respecting so important a point as that of the real character of their LORD: especially as their testimony would become the great standard of faith with sincere believers to the latest ages of the church. So that we may, without the least hesitation, place an implicit confidence in their opinion, and be convinced that those *holy men of God*, in all that relates to the person and doctrines of their Lord, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Peter i. 21.)

This being premised, I proceed now to the grand question, What were the sentiments of those servants of Jesus concerning the real character of their Master?

The testimony I shall begin with, is that of *John the Baptist*, whose early ministry claims this precedence. This man was not an *apostle* of Christ, indeed, but being his fore-runner, may very properly be classed among the servants of our Lord. His evidence is the strongest that can be, and we shall have a better conception of it, if we previously consider the high terms in which he is spoken of in holy Scripture. It was said of him, by the angel who predicted his birth, that "he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb," (Luke i. 15.) And the Evangelist St. John says, "that he was sent from God for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe," (John i. 7.) A witness from God surely challenges a more than ordinary attention from man! And, as if these relations of John were not sufficient to impress

our minds with the strongest conviction of the greatness of his character, our Lord himself sums up the account when he says, that "among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist," (Matt. xi. 11.) Indeed, there was somewhat so singular and striking about the person of John, that when he began his ministry, "all men mused in their hearts whether he himself were not the Christ," (Luke iii. 15.) Such was the eminence and sanctity of John the Baptist! Let us hear, therefore, this man's testimony concerning our blessed Lord.

He opened his commission by preaching the doctrine of repentance as the necessary means for "preparing the way of the Lord;" and in all his discourses constantly referred to *him* that was to follow him. And that no question might arise whose way it was that he prepared, the apostle Paul, in his sermon to the Ephesians, hath determined the matter. "John (says he) verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus," (Acts xix. 4.) And when the Jewish Sanhedrim, in consequence of this new doctrine, and the multitudes that flocked from all parts to hear John preach, sent priests and Levites to demand who he was, and whether he were the Christ, he disclaimed all pretensions to that high title, and modestly assumed to himself the office only of being his forerunner. "I am the voice (says he) of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias," (John i. 23.) It were unnecessary, I should suppose, to observe, that the prophet Isaiah, when predicting the Messiah's approach, (in his fortieth chapter) literally described his Harbinger under this exact character. One part, however, of this prophecy (and that a most essential part in proof of the doctrine we are now treating of,) I must desire may be attended to with that particular and respectful notice to which it

is entitled by its great importance; namely, that this voice, which it was predicted should cry in the wilderness, was to prepare the way of the Lord: not the way of a *man*, however great or distinguished; but "the way of the Lord;" to make straight in the desert, "an highway for our God:" that then the glory of the Lord was to be revealed, and all flesh should see it together.* Admitting, therefore, what has never been disputed, that John the Baptist was he whom the prophet had in view in this memorable prophecy, which the Evangelists declare, and our Lord himself confirms;† nothing can more fully define the dignity of *his* sacred person, whose way he came to prepare.

And that John considered Christ in this exalted point of view, is evident from the account he gives of himself when compared to him. "I, indeed, baptize you with water, unto repentance, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," (Matt. iii. 11.) What humiliating notions must this "greatest among them that are born of women" have entertained of himself; and what unequalled ideas of his divine LORD, the very "latchet of whose shoes" he thought himself "unworthy to unloose!" Is it possible he could have expressed the GODHEAD of Jesus in stronger terms than these?

Again:—The day after John had given his answer to the question of the Priests and Levites, he repeated his testimony of our Lord, with other more particular marks of distinction; for, seeing Jesus coming towards him, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I spake, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me," (John i. 29, 30,) evidently alluding to our Lord's pre-existence; for, with respect to

* See Isaiah xl.

† Compare the Evangelists *in loco* with Isaiah xl.

the appearance of Christ in the flesh, John was born six months before him, and therefore he could not have said this, but in reference to his former being. But what renders the Baptist's testimony so highly conclusive and important, is the assurance he gives, that all his knowledge of Jesus was derived from supernatural information he had received. That, as to himself, he was totally ignorant both of the nature and dignity of Christ, until these things were confirmed to him by the corresponding tokens which attended the baptism of Jesus, and which he who had called him to the office of an herald, pointed out as the distinguishing marks by which he should know the Messiah: "I knew him not, (says he) but he that sent me to baptize, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God," (John i. 33, 34.)

Such is the testimony of John the Baptist on the important question of our Lord's GODHEAD. After the review we have taken of his evidence, it would almost be an insult to the understanding, to demand what must have been the opinion of the Baptist concerning the person of Christ. For surely it is impossible to suppose, that he could have ascribed to our Lord so many distinguishing properties of a divine Being, but under a perfect assurance of his divine nature. When, therefore, we recollect that one principal object of John's embassy was for a "witness to bear witness to the truth, (John v. 33,) that all men through him might believe," (John i. 7,) his single testimony ought to have more weight than a thousand arguments, to strengthen and confirm the faith of believers in this great article of our religion. And though, as our blessed Redeemer hath himself observed, "he hath greater witness than that of John, (John v. 36,) and receives not testimony from man," (John v. 34,) because, in fact, he needs it not;

yet to us, it becomes a very strong collateral consideration, in addition to the numerous evidences with which this principle of our faith is every where supported in the sacred writings. And, as I am well assured, the testimony of the Baptist cannot but be highly gratifying to every sincere believer in the divinity of Jesus; so I hope this man's evidence who came, let it be remembered, "a witness to the truth, that all men through him might believe," will be seriously and coolly considered by every one who may be in danger of being led away by a different persuasion, before this grand and distinguishing article of the Christian church is relinquished.*

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* In the conclusive scenes of John's life, a circumstance occurs which has been thought by some to favour a different opinion from what the Baptist had given before of our Lord. As one whose duty and inclination both prompt him to candour, I think it highly proper to produce it upon the present occasion, but without the smallest apprehension that it will be found, when duly considered, to militate against John's former testimony, but rather strengthening it. The circumstance I allude to is, the question which John sent, when in prison, by two of his disciples, unto Jesus, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" If we attend to the context we shall find, that John sent this message at a time when his disciples brought him intelligence of the mighty works of our Lord. And as these were so many additional proofs of Jesus answering to the character John had given him, it cannot be supposed the account of them would lessen the Baptist's opinion of Christ. It would be very extraordinary, that he, who had given the most decided evidence to the greatness of our Lord's character, and whose evidence sprung from somewhat more than human authority, should afterwards have scruples of his own to satisfy, and now, in the end of his ministry, should begin to doubt the truth of our Lord's mission. It has been said that, perhaps the mind of John, soured by long imprisonment and unjust suffering, might be warped from his former sentiment. Perhaps it might. No doubt, the pressure of trouble may induce effects of this kind. How weak is the faith of the best of men very frequently found under severe trials. How often are sincere Christians tempted to exclaim in the anguish of their soul, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" When they know, and are convinced in the same moments, that the Lord is very gracious. Suppose somewhat like this to be the situation of John, his sufferings might have given an asperity to his temper, and yet his notions of Christ might continue just the same. But I do not see the necessity of supposing John had any doubts in his mind concerning our blessed Lord, when he sent his disciples with this message unto him. I rather think the whole design of

From John the Baptist, let us proceed to Peter the Apostle, whose opinion concerning the character of Christ, must be equally acceptable, and together with it become of great weight in the argument.

That our Lord was of a divine nature, and differing most essentially from a mere man, in the sentiments of Peter, can hardly be questioned, from the several quotations of Scripture which we have already taken notice of; for such declarations as the apostle occasionally made, during the life of Jesus, cannot possibly be reconciled with a different opinion. Hence we hear him frequently expressing his faith, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." But it is not barely assenting, in so many words, to this truth, that we consider as the only criterion of his judgment; for we find him also, testifying his belief by a corresponding behaviour, as one that had the fullest persuasion of our Lord's GODHEAD. Once, indeed, as if in a dependence upon it, attempting, at the command of Jesus, to walk upon the water, which plainly implied an unbounded confidence in the power of Christ, (Matt. xiv. 28.) Such conduct is not to be accounted for, upon principles of common sense, with the supposition that all this while Peter believed his Master to be no more than a mere man, and in every respect the same as himself, except in the commission he had received from God.

But there are circumstances yet more pointed to indicate the sentiments of Peter, during some particular occasions, in the life of Christ. As for example, in his

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the Baptist was with a view to *their* conviction, and not *his own*. The disciples of John felt, perhaps, a laudable concern at the growing popularity of our Lord, and the decline of their master's reputation. John had endeavoured to convince them, that "he was not the Christ, but only sent before him," (John iii. 28.) In order, therefore, to satisfy their scrupulous minds concerning the dignity of Jesus, the Baptist adopted this method of introducing them more immediately into our Lord's presence, that from seeing and hearing the wonderful effects of his ministry, they might be convinced that he was the Messiah which was for to come. (John iii. 30 to the end.)

retirement on the mount, when only Peter, and James, and John, were permitted to be present with him, and when our Lord was transfigured before them; the glory, or shechinah, in which he then appeared, was so similar to the glory of Jehovah, on Mount Sinai, that it produced the same effect upon the apostles as that did on Moses, for "they feared as they entered into the cloud," (Luke ix. 34.) And it was this resemblance, no doubt, which suggested to the mind of Peter the idea of building three tabernacles, on which the glory might remain, as it used to do upon the tabernacle in the wilderness.* But the most remarkable circumstance in this awful scene, is the effect the voice, which came out of the cloud, produced upon the apostles, in declaring our Lord to be "the beloved Son of God;" for when they heard it, they fell upon their faces and "were sore afraid." What sentiments the apostles entertained of their Lord, in consequence of this solemn transaction, is not, indeed, expressly said; but if their behaviour can be supposed to imply any thing, it gave the most positive assurance that they were deeply smitten with the consciousness of the greatness of his character. And had they desired to shew their perfect apprehension of the presence of the GODHEAD, they could not have done it more emphatically than by prostrating themselves to the earth as they did before Christ, and continuing in that situation until the vision was past.

Another incident in the life of Jesus, where the

* It is impossible for the most ordinary reader to peruse the account of this scene of Christ's transfiguration, and compare it with the relation that is given of the descent of Jehovah on Mount Sinai, without being struck with the wonderful resemblance between them. The glory in which Jehovah was encircled, the cloud covering the mount, the apprehension of Moses as he entered into the cloud, all are exactly similar to the description of the transfiguration; I think myself justified, therefore, in supposing that it was the recollection of the history of this solemn scene, which put into Peter's mind the idea of the Jewish tabernacle. (Compare the Evangelist *in loco*, with Exodus xxiv. 15. *et seq.*)

apostle Peter appears to have had the most lively sense of the GODHEAD of his LORD, was shewn at the miraculous draught of fishes. The behaviour of Peter upon this occasion seems to have arisen from a religious apprehension upon his mind, such as we read in Scripture affected holy men of old, when under a consciousness of the divine presence. Of this kind was the dread Jacob felt on seeing the face of God at Peniel, (Gen. xxxii. 30;) and of Gideon and Manoah, upon the appearance of an angel, (Judges vi. 22, xiii. 22.) The words which Peter made use of, in consequence of the wonderful capture of fishes, can only be explained upon the same principle. Convinced by this act of our Lord, that there was somewhat of a superior nature in his person, and fearing, after such a display of divine power, what other effects might follow, "he fell down at the knees of Jesus, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," (Luke v. 8.)

These occurrences during the ministry of our Lord, afford very strong arguments to the persuasion, that Peter, as well as the other apostles, occasionally considered their blessed Lord under a character very different from that of a mere man. I say, *occasionally;* for it should be observed, that it is not during the season in which our blessed Lord continued among them, that we are to look for their full attestation of Christ's divinity. Their faith was then imperfect and wavering; their notions of Jesus, crude and undetermined. It was a long time before they could be brought to relinquish their national prejudices, which had taught them to expect a mighty prince, and a deliverer, in the person of the Messiah, so as to receive our Lord under that character. Nor, indeed, was the conviction, that "it was he that should deliver Israel," (Luke xxii. 21,) firmly rooted in their minds, until the great events which followed the death of Jesus in the coming of the HOLY GHOST, had corrected their judgment respecting the nature of the

Messiah's kingdom, and thoroughly instructed them, in what related to the great object of his mission.

The writings of the prophets, in their predictions of the promised Saviour, had, it is true, fully shewn that some mysterious union would constitute his character; and that he should be both a suffering and a triumphant prince. Yet it were a weakness to suppose, that a body of ignorant fishermen should be so well read in Scripture as to comprehend what even the Sanhedrim could not explain. Hence, therefore, it is not during the life of Jesus, that we are to expect from the mouth of the apostles a settled and undeviating testimony to his GODHEAD. The expressions leading to this opinion, which we find they occasionally made use of, are rather to be considered as given in some peculiar moments, when the rays of his divine nature bursting through the veil of flesh in which he was clothed, forced a transient conviction from his astonished disciples; but which the familiar occurrences of a few days soon again effaced. Similar to the common effects of the world. Some of the most splendid operations, however powerfully they may awaken the faculties of the mind, yet they produce only a momentary impression, which the recurrence of familiar objects very speedily removes. Somewhat of this kind was the situation of the apostles, with respect to the opinion they were prompted to entertain of their Lord's divinity. They beheld numberless events in the life of Jesus, which plainly declared him to be more than mortal. His words, his actions, his miracles, in short, every occurrence connected with his more immediate ministry, were altogether great and illustrious; yet when viewed in conjunction with the common circumstances of a man, and of a very poor and humble man too, can we wonder that such things should frequently banish from the memory of the disciples the real greatness of their Lord's character? To repeat, therefore, what was just before observed, we are not to look for a fixed opinion

on this great question from the disciples, until the descent of the Holy Ghost. When, indeed, this divine illumination from above had fully informed their minds of the principles of the gospel, and they were qualified to become witnesses unto Christ, "both in Jerusalem and Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth," (Acts i. 8;) then may we expect to find, in all the accounts they give of the person and character of their Lord, one uniform and steady opinion. And such, I conceive, to have been the general sentiments of the apostles upon this important question; bearing, upon every occasion, as far as was expedient, with the leading object of their commission, a full evidence to the GODHEAD of CHRIST.

In particular, Peter, whose testimony we are now considering (and who holds so distinguished a rank among the apostles), hath left us sufficient information, both from his discourses and his writings, to conclude, that after being enlightened with the influences of the Holy Spirit, he was but the more strongly confirmed in the sentiments he had before occasionally entertained of the divine nature of Christ.

Whoever examines his first sermon, preached on the day of Pentecost, with an unprejudiced mind, will perceive strong marks of the perfect conviction which Peter must have possessed of this great truth. But in that critical season, when addressing a body of Jews upon the subject of our Lord's mission and character, it certainly required no small degree of caution, how he insisted much upon so delicate a point as the GODHEAD of one whom they had lately crucified. It is worthy of observation, what discretion the apostle used upon this occasion, so as to engage the attention of his audience, and no less to remove their prejudices against the doctrine he was anxious to recommend. He begins his sermon, therefore, by appealing to their own knowledge, for the truth of the wonderful events which had distin-

guished the life of Jesus of Nazareth, "a man (says he) approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know," (Acts ii. 22, *et seq.*) And to obviate any ill effects which might arise in their minds, from the recollection of the part they had acted in the death of Jesus, he declares that his death was entirely brought to pass "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and that, in consequence of this divine ordination it was, "that they had crucified and slain him." Having thus guarded against what was most likely to have inflamed their minds, had the apostle mentioned these truths with the smallest acrimony; he now proceeds to the great object he had in view, from his discourse, namely, to assert the certainty of our Lord's resurrection; and (what is most to my present purpose) he does this by proving that this glorious event was accomplished from physical necessity; or to use the stronger expression of the apostle, "having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." If these terms do not imply the apostle's persuasion of the divine nature of our Lord, I am at a loss to comprehend any meaning in them. For had Peter considered Jesus but as a man, nay, had he not considered him above the nature of a man, there was no impossibility in the thing itself, of his being holden by what he calls "the pains of death." And, as a further confirmation of this doctrine, he brings before them the prophecy of David, and applies it to the person of Christ. "For David (says he) speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Having quoted this passage, Peter desires permission to speak

freely upon it, and calls upon them to observe, that these things could have no reference to the Patriarch David, because "he was both dead and buried, and his sepulchre remained unto that day: but being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that *his* soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." By these arguments, having proved the physical necessity of the resurrection, both from our Lord's nature, and the concurrent testimony of prophecy, the apostle, in the conclusion of his sermon, describes the Redeemer under such expressions as carry with them the most satisfactory proofs, how strongly impressed his mind must have been with the belief of the superior nature of our Lord. "Therefore (says he) let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

In Peter's second, and subsequent sermons, he names our Lord by such titles as would be the highest ungodliness, if applied to any created being. He calls him the Holy One, and the Just, the Prince of Life, (Acts iii. 14, 15.) And when we find that the preaching of Peter was accompanied with such demonstrations of *his* power, under whose commission he acted; miracles both of mercy and judgment, purposely wrought to establish the faith, and all expressly done in the sole name, and by the power of Jesus Christ; is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle should thus preach, and act, and constantly refer all the glory to his blessed Lord, and yet have no apprehensions of his GODHEAD? That he should work every miracle as by *his* authority, and proclaim every blessing to be expected, but through *him:* nay, to declare, that salvation could be through no other; "neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," (Acts iv. 12:) and still all

this while believe that Jesus was simply no other than a man like himself; and that it was the merit of a man only, through whom salvation for millions of the human race could be procured? Can it be possible to suppose this? Surely it requires such a stretch of credulity, as the highest mystery of the Christian faith cannot be charged with, to give into the belief of such a persuasion! Be the matter of fact, therefore, whatever it may, concerning the real dignity of our blessed Lord, that Peter had a conviction of his divinity cannot, I think, well be doubted, for the contrary notion would be hard to reconcile with those repeated declarations we meet with in his discourses.

Before we quit our review of this man's evidence, it may not be amiss to add, that as in his preaching, so in his writings, we find his testimony the same. In his last epistle (written as is very probably supposed,* the year before his martyrdom, and at a time when he had the prospect of death in view; and purposely written, that they who had obtained like precious promises with himself, might be able, after his decease, to have the truths of Christianity always in remembrance in this epistle); he shews very plainly, that as he had lived, so he died, in the faith of this important doctrine. The apostle, among other matters, particularly alludes to the glorious scene of Christ's transfiguration; and the observations he makes upon it, may serve to convince us, what impression it had left upon his mind of the greatness of his Lord's character. "We have not followed (said he) cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This

* It is with great reason imagined, that Peter wrote his Second Epistle, anno 67; and history informs us, that he suffered martyrdom anno 68, the fourteenth year of the Emperor Nero.

is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount," (2 Pet. i. 16, *et seq.*) Enough hath been said, I should hope, in the introduction of particulars to ascertain what was the opinion of the apostle Peter concerning the person of Jesus Christ. And if I have faithfully stated this man's testimony (which I trust I have), his evidence is such an one, as (to use his own words) "we shall do well to take heed unto, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place," 2 Pet. i. 19.

The same observation with which I began the review of Peter's testimony, may, with equal propriety, be made respecting the evidence of the apostle John. After the plentiful quotations from the writings of this disciple, any further reference is unnecessary, in order to shew what were his sentiments upon the subject of Christ's deity. Indeed the very preface to his gospel is in itself a full decision of it. Without going over his writings again, suffer me only to detain you with one observation more, respecting the evidence of this highly favoured servant of his Lord, which will supersede the necessity of many lesser arguments; and that is, the account which he has given of the supreme dignity of Jesus, in his book of the Revelations. In this mysterious canon of Scripture, we find much information concerning our Lord's real character, which might be produced with great advantage to our present cause; but a single passage will be sufficient. In the first chapter the apostle, after opening his subject with the highest ascriptions of praise and dominion, "to him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins, in his own blood;" goes on to describe the personal appearance of our Lord to him, in an effulgence of brightness and glory, in which Jesus assumes every divine honour, and speaks of the future dispensations which were to take place in his church. What sentiments the apostle then had, and ever after retained, concerning the GODHEAD of CHRIST, let any one who reads John's

account of this vision determine. "When he saw him (he says) he fell at his feet as dead," and heard him proclaim his name under these great characters, "the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last." Could he possibly doubt the GODHEAD of such a being? Did the apostle consider these eternal properties belonging to our Lord, but as so many distinctions of the glorified man Christ Jesus? And at the time when he was under the immediate impression of this vision, or afterwards when he recorded it for the edification of future ages, had he no apprehension himself that Jesus was any thing more than a man, whom God had highly exalted for the perfect merit of his life, and his beneficial ministry; and yet with not the least idea of the divinity of his Lord, he should transmit such accounts of him as must determine others to the belief of it with perfect conviction? Are such palpable contradictions to be admitted? Strange, that it should not immediately appear to persons of this opinion, that they are not only impeaching the veracity of John as a writer, but bringing the heaviest accusation against the great Saviour of the world, in suffering such representations of him to be made in his church, as must infallibly lead into error the faith of mankind! Could we but once suppose this, the blessing which is promised "to him that readeth the words of this book, and keepeth the things which are written therein," (Rev. i. 3,) would be converted into a curse; and unable to satisfy the mind with the certainty of any one proposition we meet with in Scripture; we should be like the dove of Noah in search of land, without a place to rest our foot on through the whole of God's word. Praised be the Divine Goodness, the matter is not left to a reasoning so precarious and uncertain! "The disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things," could not be deceived; "we know that his testimony is true," (John xxi. 24:) "for these things were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that be-

lieving we might have life through his name," (John xx. 31.)

The evidence of Thomas the apostle, on the great question of our Lord's GODHEAD (which is the next to which I request your attention), is so decisive upon the subject, that it hath with great reason been considered as one of the most important testimonies upon record. Even they who reject the belief of Christ's divine nature, are yet at a loss to reconcile their different opinion with this man's sentiments. It is but a single incident in the life of Thomas, in which we find this profession of his faith, and delivered upon a memorable occasion; but it is an incident which hath proved (as no doubt it was designed by the providence of God) the most favourable and propitious to the establishing the minds of believers firm and unshaken, in this great article of their creed.

It is, I believe, generally known, that the absence of Thomas from the first assembly of the disciples, after our blessed Lord arose from the dead, prevented that sight of Christ, which would most probably, had he been present, have produced the same conviction upon him that it did upon the rest. But though there seems to have been no apparent reason, wherefore he should doubt the truth of the report of the resurrection of Jesus (considering the assurances he had received of the fact itself from his fellow apostle), yet, from an unaccountable incredulity, Thomas not only refused to believe it upon their testimony, but also declared that he never would be convinced of it, but upon such evidence as appeared at that time highly improbable should be granted him.

Upon the next meeting, however, of the disciples, Thomas was present with them, and in a manner similar to his former visit, Jesus again appeared before them. His miraculous entrance,* and his immediate address to

* The miraculous entrance of our blessed Lord amidst the circle of his disciples, is so very high a proof in my esteem of the deity of his nature, and so important to my present argument, that I must desire to

the unbelieving disciple, in offering the very proofs he h demanded for his conviction, so powerfully operated u n the mind of the apostle, in confirming both the c tainty of his resurrection, and the divine power by v ich he had accomplished it, that subdued by these e dences, he cried out in an ecstacy of joy, "My Lord! d my God!" Though no form of words could more ongly express the divinity of him, to whom it was plied, yet it hath been said, that this confession of e apostle's was simply no other than the effect of a dden surprise, as if he had said, "Then it was really ue!" But never was there a more miserable expedient get rid of a difficulty.

Had the words of Thomas been merely an excla-

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sist up it somewhat more particularly. Sceptics have been pleased to ring forward this account of Christ's interview with his apostles, with great confidence as making against the credibility of the fact itself, of he resurrection of Jesus. Unable to account upon philosophical principles for the entrance of a body into a room when all the avenues were shut by which any thing substantial might pass; they have been pleased to treat the whole as fabulous. But so far is the thing itself from giving just occasion to this cavil, that the impossibility of accounting for it upon physical principles, proves the very point in question, namely, that it was accomplished by the divine power of Jesus. It is indeed a full proof of our Lord's omnipotency. For that Christ effected this entrance by means truly miraculous, is evident from the circumstances of the case. In the evangelist's account of it, it is remarkable that he is no less particular in his observation that "the doors were shut," than he is in stating the certainty that it was the "real body of Christ" which appeared. He tells us that Jesus pointed out to his disciples the difference between a spiritual essence and a material substance, that "a spirit had not flesh and bones as they saw he had:" and in testimony that what they saw was real, "he shewed them his hands and his side," and desired they would yet further convince themselves of the truth of it by feeling him. All which fully prove, that the disciples were not under the influence of an illusion in what they beheld, but that it was the real body of Jesus which had been crucified. Now as the entrance of a body into a room, as before described, could not have been accomplished but by some supernatural agency (it being contrary to all the known properties of physics), it must follow that He who possessed the supreme power of altering or suspending at his pleasure the established laws of nature, possessed also omnipotency, which can belong only to God.

mation of astonishment, how comes it to pass that Christ should have considered them as the profession of his faith? For there is a manifest difference between wonder and conviction. And yet it is plain, that our blessed Lord accepted what Thomas said, as the confession of the fullest conviction; "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed." Besides, had Thomas spoken as a man under the immediate effect of surprise, and without any particular meaning, it is not likely that he would have done it in so deliberate and repeated a manner. He might have said, *My Lord!* or *My God!* singly, but not both. The uniting of these expressions, should not seem very probable in the apostle's circumstances, nor do I think, that in this case, Thomas would have addressed himself so immediately to Christ, as it is evident he did, but rather to the disciple that happened to be nearest to him. But whether these considerations are to the purpose or not, there is one which certainly is, namely, that in the original the article which is prefixed invariably determines the sense, wherever it is used with those words, as being applicable only to God. It is therefore wholly unaccountable that the apostle should address Christ in those words, unless he had a real apprehension of the GODHEAD of his person. And to suppose otherwise, that Thomas, though using such expressions, had no conception of Christ's divine nature, would be still more unaccountable, and our Lord's conduct equally mysterious. To call him *Lord and God*, whom he considered in the very moment of saying it but as a *man*, became idolatry. And yet we hear of no reproof from Jesus for the expression. Christ indirectly blames him indeed for his *former* incredulity, but not a word for his *latter* error. Whereas the one was infinitely more reprehensible, (supposing it to be misapplied) than the other. And that Christ should be altogether inattentive to this conduct in his servant, which, from his omniscience, he could not but be sensible would be of great

moment in succeeding ages of the church, as a standard of faith to the believer, is the most unlikely circumstance that can be imagined. In short, whoever can reconcile these points to his own satisfaction, so as to reject the testimony of Thomas to the divinity of our Lord, possesses a degree of credulity not very enviable. But he who will fairly and impartially consider the several circumstances connected with this incident in the life of the apostle will, I think, perceive strong leading characters to induce the persuasion that Thomas could not but have the most complete conviction that Christ was GOD.

The next testimony which I have to produce is of equal consequence with the former, for it was given in a peculiar situation, even in his dying moments. You will perceive I allude to that of Stephen. This man was not in the general acceptation of the word an apostle. He was, however, a disciple of Christ, and what is more immediate to our subject, he may be said to have died a martyr to the very profession of our Lord's GODHEAD.

His evidence is briefly related in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that the zeal of Stephen for the faith of the gospel, having inflamed the minds of the adversaries to Christianity with anger, they suborned men to accuse him "of speaking blasphemous words against Moses, and against God." The blasphemy against Moses is particularly specified, in that he said, "Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple, and change the customs which Moses delivered." But what could be the blasphemy against God? What was there in the doctrine of the apostles which could possibly bear this construction, except that of ascribing divinity to our blessed Saviour? The apostles had never ceased to observe among themselves, and to recommend to others, every known duty which the law enjoined to God the Father: and it is impossible to discover any thing in their conduct which could be deemed blasphemy, unless it be the divine honours

which they paid to the person of Jesus. That this was Stephen's crime there can be but little doubt. For it is observable, that notwithstanding the rage of his enemies against him, they heard the holy man with great patience, through a long address which he made before the council, while he recited the principal heads of the Jewish history. And, most likely would have granted him a longer audience, had he not connected with it the relation it bore to our blessed Lord; but no sooner did he advert to the name of Jesus, and distinguish him by the title of the Just One, (the well-known character of GODHEAD) declaring them to have been his *betrayers* and *murderers*, than "they gnashed upon him with their teeth." In this critical moment, "Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly unto heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God. And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right-hand of God." Confirming in this open and avowed manner, the testimony which he had before borne to the divinity of Jesus, they were unable to suppress their resentment any longer; but, "crying out with a loud voice, and stopping their ears, they ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him," while he with his dying breath recommended his departing soul, not immediately to the Father, but to Christ: "Lord Jesus, (says he) receive my spirit." Whether this profession of Stephen was the cause of death, I shall not insist upon; but one thing is very evident; if this man did not die a martyr to the GODHEAD of Christ, he at least died in the faith of it. And in either case, the conclusion to our present argument is the same. Such a testimony to this great article of our faith, from one under the full influence of the Holy Ghost, is peculiarly satisfactory, and cannot but impress the mind with a very strong weight of evidence.

I shall close our review of the opinion of the apostles

concerning the character of Jesus, with the testimony of St. Paul, who, though with great humility, he styles himself "the least of all the apostles, and not meet to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God," (1 Corinth. xv. 9,) yet, in the estimation of his LORD, he was "a chosen vessel, to bear his name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," (Acts ix. 15.)

Added to the inspired character of St. Paul, let us recollect, that he was converted to Christianity by a miracle from heaven, and after his conversion, the gospel which he preached, he solemnly affirms before God, he "neither received of man, neither was taught it by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," (Gal. i. 11, 12.) A more unexceptionable witness can never be desired.*

You have already noticed, I hope, in the many quotations which have been brought before you, from the Epistles of this man, what exalted accounts he has left upon record, of his Lord's character. And as these views of Christ, according to the apostle's opinion, clearly ascertain a superior dignity in his nature, it becomes a very natural question, from whence could Paul have acquired this information concerning Christ? Before his conversion, it is certain he could have had no such notions of the character of our Lord; for he was a violent persecutor of the Christian faith, and held both the name and religion of Jesus in hatred and derision. And after that miraculous event took place, it is said of him, that he conferred not with any one upon the subject of Christianity, but "straightway he began to preach Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God," (Acts ix. 20.) It is too fabulous to suppose, that the apostle

* If Paul neither received it by *man*, neither was taught it by *man*, and yet had this knowledge by the revelation of Jesus Christ; can any thing be plainer than that the apostle considered Christ as more than *man?*

should be led by an intuitive kind of knowledge in himself, to entertain those sublime ideas of Christ, especially after his former opinion of him; and if it be true that he received not this information from man, neither was taught it by man, there can be no reason to reject the solemn assurance he has given, that it was communicated to him by the revelation of Christ himself. And hence it will follow, that if our Lord condescended to be Paul's instructor, after having called him, even at the expence of a miracle, to be his servant, and giving him all necessary information respecting himself and his religion, there can be nothing erroneous in his account; and we may, with great safety, receive his testimony as infallible, for no human authority can equal it. When, therefore, we trace through every part of his inspired writings an invariable strain of evidence to the divinity of Jesus, and every great and distinguishing attribute which constitutes GODHEAD, applied to the person of Christ, can it be the question of a moment, what were the sentiments of the apostle Paul concerning his divine LORD?

But in reply to these arguments, we are told that our interpretation of these passages of the apostle, arises from a misapprehension of his meaning: that he wrote in accommodation to the spirit of the language then in use, which was very highly metaphorical and flowery, and therefore a great part of his expressions is to be considered in this sense. These things have been said and much insisted upon, but with what strength of argument comes next to be considered.

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, he tells them that when he came to them preaching the gospel, "he came not with excellency of speech, nor was his preaching with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4.) "For we use (says he) great plainness of speech," (2 Cor. iii. 12.) And so he does indeed, upon the presumption, that we are to accept what he says, according

to the most natural meaning which it bears; but if we are to look beyond the first sense of the words, and fancy one part to be mysterious and another figurative; how will this agree with the apostle's declaration, that "he uses great plainness of speech?" St. Paul, it is true, calls the sublime parts of the Christian faith a mystery, and says, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," (1 Tim. iii. 16.) But when he said this, he evidently alluded to the mystery of the incarnation: whereas if he meant nothing more by it, than that Jesus Christ was but a *man*, what *mystery* was there in this scheme of *godliness*, and how could this be called "God manifest in the flesh?"

Again: It is somewhat remarkable, that Paul should caution Timothy, as he does, to "withdraw himself from men of perverse disputings and corrupt minds:" and to remark, moreover, that "if any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, that he is proud, and knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words," (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5.) All this is very singular in coming from a man who is supposed to be continually wrapping up his instructions, not in wholesome words, but in allegory and figure; and yet who, at the same time, declares the great cause of the rejection of the gospel, is from the pride and wisdom of the world, to whom "the preaching of the cross is foolishness," (1 Cor. i. 18.)

It is still more remarkable, that in this apostle's Epistle to the Colossians, he bids them "beware lest any man should spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;" and in the next verse, immediately adds, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (Col. ii. 8, 9.) Had the apostle feared he should be misunderstood in this passage, instead of telling the Colossians, to beware of the "tradi-

tions of men," and the "rudiments of the world," he should have warned them against supposing that he meant any thing by the "indwelling of the Godhead bodily in Christ;" whereas, there is not a syllable said of this, but only a caution against being spoiled by that "philosophy and vain deceit," which prompt men to cavil with such truths of religion as are not fairly upon a level with the apprehensions of the human mind.

These considerations serve to explain, in what sense we are authorized to accept the writings of Paul; and to suppose that a man, who professedly used great plainness of speech himself, and recommended it to others, should dwell so continually in figure as to mislead the understanding of his readers upon all occasions.

But besides those instances, which we have reviewed in proof of the apostle Paul's testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ, there is one more which remains to be noticed, equally decisive, and which can upon no consideration whatever be explained, but upon the belief that the apostle had a full persuasion of the GODHEAD of our Lord; I mean the prayers which he offered up personally to Christ.

The awful scene in the road to Damascus, at the time of his conversion, is the first instance of the kind we meet with in Paul's history, in which he addressed our Lord, and received an answer to his petition, (Acts ix. 6.) And again, we find the same application immediately made to Christ when the apostle was under some particularly afflicting circumstance, for which he says, "he thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from him," (2 Cor. xii. 8.) That it was Christ, and not the Father he prayed to, is evident from the whole affair as related. And it should seem indeed, both from this incident, and from various accounts to be traced in his writings, that it was the apostle's usual custom in his devotions, immediately to address them to the Lord Jesus Christ. He inscribes his Epistle to the Corin-

thians, not only *to them*, but "to all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus," (1 Cor. i. 2.) And his general benediction, with which he concludes his Epistles, implies the same: "Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

I fear I have exhausted the patience with which you have hitherto heard me on the present subject. But the testimony of the apostles, and first servants of Jesus, concerning the real character of their LORD, became too interesting, to be hastily passed over, and without due examination.

The several opinions of those "chosen witnesses of God," have now been brought before you (as far as they are obtainable;) and when you have thoroughly reflected upon the evidences themselves, and the fair and unimposing manner in which they have been offered to your consideration; you will give them, I doubt not, the credit to which they shall appear to you to be justly entitled.

The whole question respecting the validity of their testimony may be reduced to a single point. Either they were believers in the divinity of Jesus, or they were not. If they were *not*, I shudder at the very idea, that men illumined by the Divine Spirit should have deified a creature, and have led the whole Christian world into the grossest idolatry! Who but must tremble to conceive such horrible criminality in those faithful, unambitious followers of Jesus Christ? What could be their inducement to destroy all their own prospects of salvation, and involve in irremediable guilt, millions of their fellow-creatures? And upon the supposition that they neither believed this doctrine *themselves*, or intended to lead *others* into such a persuasion, what a wonderful coincidence of circumstances must it have been, to induce the effects which their writings have produced.

But if they believed themselves, what they have so fully taught (as every principle of candour and liberality, independent of higher motives, would lead us to conclude,) with what an accumulation of evidence is the GODHEAD of our blessed LORD confirmed and assured!

It were almost needless to add, concerning these apostles and first disciples of our Lord, "whose faith we ought to follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ! the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 7, 8.)

SERMON VIII.

MATTHEW XXII. 42.

What think ye of Christ?

If the importance of the subject to which I have of late so frequently requested your attention, did not supersede every other consideration, I should have thought it necessary to have prefaced several of the preceding discourses with an apology. But though I feel great apprehension, lest, from the very defective manner in which the subject hath been treated, I should have failed in my endeavours to exhibit the proofs of our Lord's GODHEAD in that strong point of view which may be requisite for the establishment of perfect conviction in your minds; (and which I cannot but think, would be the sure consequence arising from the evidences themselves, if taught of God;) yet I persuade myself that the humblest efforts in such an interesting cause, will need no recommendation with all sincere minds. To have a just and proper conception of *his* person and character, who is "the Author and Finisher of our faith," cannot but be desirable and gratifying to all his followers.

Nor is this the only object to be answered by it. The great question of our Lord's GODHEAD certainly involves the highest concerns of Christianity. Whoever wishes to derive comfort and assurance from the promises of the Gospel, and especially in the more interesting parts of it, which relate to the future prospects of our nature, must first be convinced of the truth of that authority on which the whole rests, that "He is faithful who has promised," (Heb. x. 23.) Neither do I

conceive it possible that any man can experience the full extent of the consolations which the religion of Jesus affords, who hath not imbibed a portion of the same faith which actuated the apostle Paul: "I know (says he) whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," (2 Tim. i. 12.)

But though the importance of the subject itself, may, I hope, in some degree, justify and account for the great length to which I have been necessarily led in the prosecution of it; yet it may be equally satisfactory now to observe, that with the present discourse I shall close it altogether, and relieve your attention. Having gone over the principal evidences of Scripture, and having omitted nothing material in the argument (as far as I can recollect), I desire to leave the final decision of the great question in the text, to every man's own mind in the sight of God: "What think ye of Christ?"

It was with this view, you may remember, that the several testimonies have been proposed for your consideration, in order that you might, in a free and unbiassed manner, draw such conclusions from them as, after mature deliberation and earnest prayer to God, should appear to you to be right and proper. Sensible of the weighty nature of the subject, it became a matter of conscience with me from the first, to be extremely cautious in advancing any thing in proof, but upon the most undeniable testimony. And as there appeared to be but one method by which this could be done, I have endeavoured to follow it, in making the Holy Scriptures the only standard of decision. If, however, I have in any point unknowingly departed from this rule, or if I have considered any of the sacred writers in a different sense from what they themselves intended, you will but behold in me a new instance of that very fallibility I have studied to avoid; and from this additional proof of human weakness or prejudice, and in the very exertion

of what I may venture to name the sincerest and best intention, you will the more sensibly be convinced of the propriety of what I have suggested, that on subjects of this serious nature there should be no compulsion, but "let every man be fully persuaded (as the apostle speaks) in his own mind," (Rom. xiv. 5.)

Convinced, indeed, after all, from every observation of human nature, how apt the wisest are to err when left to the mere direction of their own minds, and that all our knowledge (more especially religious knowledge) must be derived from the teachings of the Divine Spirit (because that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3,) I called upon you at our entrance upon the subject, to bend with me before the throne of God, and implore light and direction from heaven to precede our path, that the "Spirit of truth might guide us into all truth." And having now finished our researches, under an humble dependence on the divine aid, I must earnestly again request you to join with me in prayer, that our conclusions may be under the same gracious direction; "that in every thing being enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, the testimony of Jesus may be confirmed in us, so that we come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Corinth. i. 5, 6, 7.)

The intention of the present discourse is to take a brief survey of the several arguments which have been illustrated in a more copious manner, and by concentrating the whole evidence arising from thence, to shew the GODHEAD of Jesus in a more distinct and luminous point of view; it is on this account I therefore once more request your attention to the subject.

You will recollect, that the only object proposed from these Sermons, was an impartial and candid inquiry concerning the person and character of Jesus Christ. Whether he is to be classed among the frail and peccable race of men (as some professors of the Gospel have sup-

posed,) or whether he is to be regarded in that sacred and exalted light (in which the established church of this country hath invariably considered him,) "as the eternal Son of God?"

In the investigation of this interesting question, my endeavours were first directed to shew that, from the appellation by which our blessed Lord is every where distinguished in the New Testament as the Son of God, there arose a strong presumptive evidence that his nature must be divine. For, when we find such a peculiar name uniformly marking his person; applied to him at the first by the angel which predicted his miraculous incarnation; afterwards confirmed by a supernatural voice from heaven, both at his baptism and at his transfiguration; assumed by Jesus himself, and particularly at a season the most critical, when it was made the pretence for his condemnation; that even spirits of darkness gave their testimony, however reluctantly, to the truth of it; and that this was the very name by which Christ was always known to his followers: it is hardly possible to conceive such a concurrence of circumstances in confirmation of our Lord's pretensions to this character, and yet that it should be a mere barren title without meaning. To a mind perfectly free from prejudice (as I then observed) the repeated and multifarious testimonies, which so fully and unequivocally distinguish our Lord by this term, must as decidedly prove his GODHEAD. For the phrase cannot, upon any ground, be applicable to him, but upon the clear assurance that he possessed an eternal existence with his Father underived from creation, by which he becomes truly and properly the Son of God.*

But as the mere name, unconnected with power, carries with it but the smallest degree of evidence to the GODHEAD of Jesus, I considered the argument arising

* Sermon I.

rom hence but in a collateral point of view, and there-
ore passed on to circumstances more positive and sub-
tantial. In doing which I desired you to regard the
reat *criteria* of our Lord's divine nature, in the events
hich preceded his incarnation. The sacred writers have
eft upon everlasting record such accounts of Christ, and
ave ascribed to him such powers and operations, as
hen proved, cannot but impress the mind with the
ullest conviction of his supreme dignity in whom those
erfections are found.

In examining the testimonies of this kind, I then
ntered upon the proofs which we have in Scripture of
ur Lord's pre-existence, as the first circumstance which,
n point of order, claimed our attention. And both from
he words of Christ himself, as well as from the assu-
ances of his apostles, I endeavoured to shew you, that
o one fact can be more strongly attested, nor any truth
nore clearly proved, than that Christ had a state of
xistence antecedent to his incarnation.

The fact, however, of this superiority of nature, dis-
inguishable in the person of Jesus, being supported by
vents still more palpable; the next observation to which
ur views were naturally directed, led us to consider
Christ under those illustrious characters, which loudly
roclaim his dignity; I mean as the Creator and Pre-
erver of the universe. And as the clear conviction of
his great truth became so highly important in the argu-
ent, I went very largely into this part of the subject, in
athering the evidences as they arise from Scripture, and
rought before you the most unanswerable testimonies
n proof of it. Such views of Christ being apparently
onclusive in determining the certainty of his GODHEAD,
question involuntarily arises in the mind, how it is
ossible to resist such evidences? And surely, unless
uch evidences could wholly, or in a great measure, be
efuted, there cannot be conceived any thing more
aring than that of passing by all those testimonies of

Scripture, dethroning the Son of God, and bringing him down to the level of a poor peccable creature like ourselves! There should be, doubtless, some better ground to go upon than merely the airy conjectures and presumptuous reasonings of the human mind.

When I brought these proofs of Christ's GODHEAD before you, I desired you seriously to ponder the cogency of these solemn considerations. Whether any man can really suppose, that the meek and unaspiring temper of Jesus would have assumed divine honours, have declared his possession of "glory with his Father before the world," with other intimations of a similar nature, unless his claims were rightly founded? Or whether it is likely, that the servants of such a master should have been so forward in ascribing to him the incommunicable properties of the great Supreme, unless they had been most fully assured of the truth of what they asserted?*

Having proceeded thus far in the subject, in producing such proofs of our Lord's exalted character, as clearly justified the belief of his being more than human; I anticipated, and endeavoured to answer a question which appeared very likely to arise from hence; whether there are not discoverable some traces or appearances of Christ corresponding to these accounts, in the earlier ages of the world, and before his incarnation? For, though the facts which give belief to his divinity cannot be strengthened by any considerations of this kind (supposing the evidences themselves undeniable,) yet, if there can be discovered in the Old Testament any thing which shews a connexion with the account given of him in the New, it will serve no doubt to illustrate the point more fully, and altogether confirm our faith in the GODHEAD of Jesus.

Under this idea I requested you to examine with me

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* Sermon II.

he Scriptures of the Old Testament, in order to learn what account we derive from thence concerning the erson of our Lord. Though the subject, no doubt, is ighly intricate, and enveloped in much mystery, yet I rust the reasons adduced were strong and satisfactory, o shew that there is great probability, that all the relaions we meet with in these early ages of the world, of he appearance of a *personal* Jehovah, might, without iolence to the sacred text, be considered as applicable o Jesus Christ. That every dispensation of the Father especting mankind, has been uniformly carried on in the erson of his blessed Son, that *he* is our Creator, our Preserver, our Reedemer, and finally will be our Judge. t will not be necessary for me to go over every evidence then brought forward to substantiate my opinion, in rder to awaken your remembrance. It will, I hope, nswer every purpose to observe, that the circumstances referred to were of such a nature and tendency, as nade it difficult to account for them on a contrary peruasion.

Having discussed this difficult point, in the best nanner I was able, I left it to your own reflections to nake what inference you should think proper, and to letermine whether a correspondence of circumstances so very striking (and strengthened at the same time by the previous view we had taken of our Lord's greatness of character, considered as the Creator and Preserver of the niverse) did not amount to a certainty that Christ peronally appeared in the world before his incarnation; nd that all the dispensations of the Supreme Father repecting mankind have been conducted in the person of is divine Son.*

In our further pursuit of evidences, concerning the livinity of Jesus, it became a very natural and pertinent nquiry, to examine in the next place, what testimony or

* Sermon III.

account the prophets have given of this illustrious character. If those "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. i. 21,) and professedly predicted the future events of the Messiah's kingdom, it certainly is an object highly expedient to our purpose, to know what they had declared of him. The inspiration under which they penned their prophetic writings must have preserved them from error; and the intention for which they wrote, makes it but reasonable to suppose, that in their accounts of the promised Messiah, they would sketch some of the more prominent features, at least, of his person and character.

With a view to the discovery of what those holy men had delivered, concerning Israel's Saviour, I again led your thoughts to the records of the Old Testament; and in order to investigate, as accurately as possible, the important question, I brought in review the predictions of all the prophets, which had written on the subject; I mean as far as related to our purpose. For as we were not seeking information concerning the *general* character of the Messiah, nor even the *particular* marks by which Jesus Christ proved himself to be the very person, I did not consider it needful to enumerate all the passages in the writings of the prophets, which had reference to the promised Saviour. The object of our inquiry was directed to a single point; namely, under what *character* was this Messiah to appear? Whether he was expected as *a divine being*, as mere *man*, or in a mysterious union of *both?*

In my endeavours to explore this point, agreeable to the plain and unperverted sense of the prophetic writings, I made many quotations from them, and the result was fairly and impartially stated. From the concurrent testimony of those venerable witnesses, it appeared evident that the great Deliverer of Israel, whom they predicted, was to come in the mysterious union of a great but humble Saviour; possessing divine attributes, by

irtue of his eternal power and GODHEAD; and, at the ame time, by means of the human nature, endowed ith all the distinguishing properties of manhood. This as the character under which we found the prophets epicted the blessed Redeemer of the world.* And with is information we entered upon that era of the gospel, hen Jesus Christ made his appearance in the flesh.

The events which signalized the life of Jesus were, a a very copious and extensive manner, made the subct of our next examination. From the moment of his iraculous birth, to his departure into heaven, in the iew of his astonished disciples, you beheld how every ncident tended to illustrate and confirm the truth of rophecy; that, while Christ appeared open to the full npressions of *humanity* in all its various departments, e manifested no less every evidence possible to prove is *divine nature.*

I endeavoured to conduct you through the several nteresting particulars of this history of Jesus (at least uch as had a more immediate reference to the great bject of our inquiry;) and I hope that the effect which uch views cannot but awaken in every true believer, is till strongly impressed upon your minds. Among these, particularly recommended to your notice the evidences f our Lord's miraculous incarnation. And this being o very important an event in itself, and so satisfactory a proof of the subject we are upon, I dwelt the more rgely upon it; and by adducing the several corborating testimonies which confirm the fact; the prediction of prophecy, the information of the angel, the ccount of the sacred historian, and attested by the wonerful events which followed in the Redeemer's life, it ould appear that no one circumstance can be more rongly certified and assured.

From the certain conviction of the wonderful birth

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* Sermon IV.

of Jesus, I next proceeded to the evidences, equally demonstrable of the divine nature which appeared in his life. And first, of that astonishing series of miracles which he wrought. But as I then remarked to you, (and which I again particularly request may be duly observed,) it is not the miracles of Jesus simply considered in themselves, which proclaim his divinity; but it is the manner, the personal authority, by which they were performed, the forgiveness of sins, which sometimes accompanied them, and, above all, the ability Christ imparted to his disciples, of the same operations with himself: it is from these the inference of a superior and divine being, must be unavoidable. The evident line of distinction drawn between Jesus and all other workers of miracles, is such as one should expect to find between the actions of a lord and those of his servants. *They* wrought miracles to prove in whose authority they acted, *Jesus* to manifest his own.*

From the review of the miracles of our Lord, considered as testimonies of his divinity, my next proof of this doctrine was taken from the unparalleled discourses of Christ, which certainly carried with them a peculiar evidence to the same amount. In delivering his precepts to mankind, he taught (as was justly observed of him) "as one that had authority, and not as did the Scribes," (Matt. vii. 29.) The sublime topics of his religion; the awful purpose which he declared to be the great end of his coming; the language he assumed; the assurance he gave of raising the dead at the last day; the power he possessed, and said he would exert, of "drawing all men unto him," (John xii. 32;) in a word, the divine wisdom with which he taught, and the divine energy which accompanied his whole conversation, all highly demonstrate the unequalled excellence of our Lord's discourses, and utterly exclude the faintest gleam

* Sermon V.

of comparison between him and every other teacher. They prove indeed, "that never man spake as this man."

Proceeding in this methodical manner of examining the Scripture testimonies for the divinity of Jesus, my next step was, if possible, advancing yet higher in proof of it, in bringing the evidences, which declare him to have possessed all the attributes, and titles, and perfections of the Godhead. Every property known to be peculiar to the divine nature, you may recollect, was either very clearly to be distinguished in the person of our Lord, or ascribed to him by the sacred writers. To recapitulate those evidences which have been already so amply stated, would be superfluous and unnecessary. Let it suffice to say, that there is not an attribute or name, by which the incommunicable character of the great Jehovah is known in Scripture, but we find it equally applied to our blessed Lord, thereby explaining the sense of Christ's own words, when he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine," (John xvi. 15.) And surely it is highly incredible, that all the inspired writers should have thus concurred in describing the person of Jesus, under the terms by which the great Sovereign of the universe is known to his creatures, but upon the most absolute conviction that the facts are precisely as they have stated them.

The order which I observed in my arrangements of the evidences for Christ's divinity, led me next to mention *one* which I thought strongly tended to illustrate and prove the object in view: I mean the consideration of Jesus in that peculiar light which his religion represents him, as "the great sacrifice and oblation for sin." This cannot but imply a superiority in his nature equal to the object intended.

The miraculous incarnation of our Lord plainly estimated some important purpose, which could not be effected by a being merely human. And when we dis-

cover this purpose, as declared both by Christ and his apostles, was "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and behold the awful attestations which attended his last moments, all proclaiming that some grand design was wrought by his death, we cannot but feel an additional evidence arising from hence, of the divinity of his nature.

I trespass, I fear, in this recapitulation of the principal points in the several arguments which have been already noticed, but it is by this means only that they can be concentrated into one view. I shall be more brief, however, in the abstract of what remains. I would beg your recollection only of the concluding scenes of our Lord's ministry upon earth; his resurrection, his final commission to his disciples, his triumphal ascension into heaven, and his promised return as the Supreme Judge of quick and dead at the last day: such views of our Lord display a dignity in his character infinitely surpassing every idea of a being merely human. It is totally impossible to keep alive in our remembrance the persuasion of the simple humanity of Jesus, while we contemplate events of this superlative nature.

To behold him dismissing his few followers, and they of the lowest and most ignorant of the people, to the conversion of a world; assuring them of his constant presence and protection; breathing on them, and imparting the influence of the Holy Ghost; giving them power over unclean spirits, and for the working of all kinds of miracles; and having in a solemn and authoritative manner bestowed his benediction upon them; to see him carried up into heaven in the presence of his disciples: if such circumstances can be accounted for on common principles, or can be supposed possible, consistent with the nature of a mere *man;* then ought they not to be regarded as evidences of any thing *superior* in our blessed Lord; but if they are absolutely unparalleled, and altogether incompatible, except on the

presumption of divinity, I cannot perceive how the inference which necessarily results from them can be avoided, that Jesus is "the Son of God."

And when we take into the account the great scene which is to close our Lord's ministry, in the supreme office he will exercise at the last day, as the Judge of men; when he is to come, "attended with an innumerable train of angels," and in a state of glory, surpassing all conception: at whose coming, "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice," and before "whose presence heaven and earth shall flee away:" I have no idea how the sacred writers could have described to mankind the appearance of Jehovah, in a manner more completely sublime and magnificent!

But surely, such accounts can never correspond with the notion that all this refers but to the coming of an human being! Is it likely that the grave should give up the dead at the voice of a man? that angels should attend his train, and even heaven and earth pass away at his presence? Nay more, that a mere glorified man should be appointed to be the supreme Arbiter of the everlasting fate of millions, or that he should be qualified for such acts as to read the heart, and know the exact motive of every single action; to ascertain real from unintentional guilt, and to determine, with perfect justice, the several portions of reward or punishment due to every individual? Besides, (as I remarked to you) what reason can be found for the elevation of a man to a station so astonishingly high, and without all parallel? Whereas, upon the supposition of our Lord's divine nature, every difficulty vanishes, and the whole dispensation of the gospel, relating to the person and character of its blessed Author, is probable, just, and uniform, and what our pure and uncorrupt notions of things might have conceived. He who made the world, and by whose power it is preserved, assumes a body of flesh to redeem it; and having, by this mysterious process,

accomplished the purpose intended, he returns to his original state of glory, until he comes at the last day to judgment. Thus all the executive parts of the divine government are begun and carried on, and will be completed by *him*, who is the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever."*

Having thus reviewed, in the relation of Scripture, and the events of our Saviour's life, the various testimonies to his divinity, I then closed the examination of evidences, in endeavouring to ascertain what was the opinion of those artless and undesigning servants of Christ, his apostles, upon the subject; and when their sentiments are added to the general account, I trust the whole, taken together, will be found forming a body of evidence little short of demonstration. With so solid and impregnable a chain of proofs (to use the language of one of old) is this great doctrine of the Christian church bound up and fortified.

I have now, in as regular and progressive an order as the nature of the subject would admit, gone over the evidences of Scripture concerning the GODHEAD of CHRIST: and I have endeavoured to perform this duty in the plainest and most impartial manner possible; not by a long train of arguments addressed to men of science only, but in a form of words adapted to every comprehension, that like the prophet's vision, "he which runs may read," (Habak. ii. 2.) Whether I have been sufficiently successful in the proofs adduced to satisfy every candid mind, I know not; yet I venture to believe some light hath been thrown upon the subject to guide the serious in their inquiry after the truth, respecting this great article of faith.

You have seen that the testimonies in favour of this opinion are strong and numerous, and such as do not depend upon one or two passages in the word of God,

* Sermon VI.

of a doubtful meaning, expressed in parable or figure, but of the clearest construction, and in terms liable to no ambiguity. It is incredible, therefore, to suppose, that so many and various circumstances should concur to induce the belief of a doctrine which is altogether unauthorized and ill-founded! If this faith was derived from an oblique intimation, cursorily delivered by any of the sacred writers, and at a time when the merit of the great Redeemer's character was the topic of discourse; if it depended upon the opinion of a single apostle, or if it were noticed but in one part of Scripture; or if the thing itself was totally repugnant to all reason and common sense: in either of these cases there might be some plausibility of argument for refusing, or at least suspending, our opinion upon a matter of this consequence; and we should be justified in demanding some higher proofs, before we subscribed to this part of our creed. But when we behold the thing itself, connected by a chain of testimony running through the whole volume of Scripture; and such perfections, and attributes, and characters, as are utterly incompatible, except with GODHEAD, possessed by our blessed Lord, and without all scruple applied to him by every one of the inspired writers: when proofs of this kind all concentrate in the person of Jesus, to certify his divine nature; ought it not to be some mighty argument to counterbalance such powerful evidences, and not a few detached phrases of Scripture delivered in a desultory way, and such, perhaps, as if properly considered and explained, with reference to the occasion, the time, the place, or persons to whom they were addressed, would be found not unfavourable to the doctrine.

But you are to determine for yourselves under GOD's grace, what degree of respect is due to the evidences which you have now reviewed. And let me hope that this determination will not be made from the hasty impulse of the moment, but rather be the serious result

of a proper deliberation, and humble waiting in prayer upon the LORD. "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say," (1 Corinth. x. 15.) Remember, it is not a mere point of speculation or curiosity which teacheth no further than the opinion; but it is an object which includes in its consequences all the great hopes of human nature. I have already more than once observed, and now finally wish to leave the full force of the observation upon your minds, that, together with the GODHEAD of CHRIST, must stand or fall, all the peculiar and momentous doctrines of his gospel. Every thing interesting in Christianity is founded on the greatness of the Author's character. Even the *moral* precepts of his religion lose much of their dignity, and their authority is debased, if the founder be not more than man: nor hath the New Testament any thing higher to recommend it, except in novelty, than the legation of Moses.

If this be the real state of things, and the Christian's Lord be not divine, farewell to all the hopes of the faithful: his consolations are no more! Then all the gracious promises of religion, so highly encouraging to repentance and amendment of life, and with which the anxious mind, when smitten with a sense of guilt, sought a requiem, are done away, and the law of God, strict and unalterable in its demands, stands forth before the guilty conscience, arrayed in all its terrors. To what refuge shall the awakened sinner now fly, or in what sacrifice can he again place confidence? I thought (he will say) my soul secure in the expectation of pardon for my sins, through the meritorious death of God my Saviour. I understood that the apostles of Christ had instructed the world in this doctrine, that God "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," (Matt. xx. 28;) but if this be all a delusion, I am robbed of my best comforts, and am without hope. Tell me not of the virtues of human nature; for how shall any man build his hopes of

acceptance with his Maker, upon the sandy foundation of the purity of his own life! Alas! my very best deeds are largely tinctured with a mixture of infirmity. I see a mark of imperfection strongly appearing in every page of my life. And for the errors and intentional sins of nature, "should the Lord be extreme to mark all that is done amiss, who may abide it?" (Psalm cxxx. 3.) How then "by the deeds of the law shall any flesh be justified?" (Rom. iii. 20.)

And what is repentance? a patched up, blemished, and imperfect repentance, made up of alternate sorrow and sin? To-day feeling the compunction of guilt; to-morrow falling again perhaps into the same or similar transgressions: the next day renewing the serious impression, and soon after giving fresh proofs of human infirmity: and thus going on through life in the succession of offences and contrition; sometimes humbling the soul under the mighty hand of God, from a conscious unworthiness, but more frequently forgetting that "there is a God which judgeth the earth." Are these sacrifices fit to offer to the Lord? Are these fragments of a chequered life sufficiently meritorious to save the soul? Can any man be presumptuous enough to satisfy his mind that heaven *must be* the *reward* of such a train of conduct?

Considering the miserable consequence to which the rejection of our Lord's divine nature necessarily leads, and the despondency it creates in the human mind; one should imagine that the advocates for this doctrine, however secretly convinced that they are *right*, must yet wish to be *wrong:* for, surely it is the most comfortless doctrine ever proposed to mankind! To consider ourselves in a fallen, helpless state of being, exposed to various dangers, and surrounded with the numerous temptations which beset the path of duty, and in this situation to have no divine Spirit to look up to, as the helper of our infirmities, nor any divine Redeemer to

confide in, as the propitiation of our sins: conscious also of being accountable creatures, and that a day is approaching when all our actions will be brought into judgment, with every secret thought, whether it be good or bad: can there be a more discouraging and comfortless religion than this? And especially when the retrospect of life is clouded over, I do not say barely with frailties, but with *wilful* offences. To have no better support than repentance, and no refuge but what arises from the uncovenanted mercy of God: ignorant at the same time, whether *that* repentance hath been exercised in due proportion to our sins, or whether that *mercy* will be extended equal to our necessities. However hopes of this kind may sooth the mind with the speciousness of their promises, when that mind is perfectly at ease, and the awful subjects of futurity are considered as at a distance; yet when a man is just closing the book of life, and hovering between this world and the next, then it is to be apprehended, mere abstract arguments will entirely lose their efficacy. And indeed, if experience can be deemed the truest test for the ascertaining a matter of fact, we have every reason to conclude, that *those* leave the world with most complacency and satisfaction, who have learned to place their hopes and confidence in a *Saviour's merit*, and not in *their own*.

But it may be said, that we are not to judge of a doctrine by its consequences, as they may appear to us. Truth must ultimately prevail, and our duty is to anticipate her decisions. Be this, then, the great object of pursuit. Examine with all possible care and circumspection the testimonies for the GODHEAD of Jesus, which have been now proposed to your consideration, and be guided in your opinion, as you would upon any other important concern of life. Where the evidences are most palpable and convincing, there let the decision of the point rest. Ask your own heart, whether it be

possible to imagine that such an accumulation of proofs as you have now seen, uniting in testimony to this great truth, should conspire in support of any cause, unless the probability were in its favour. And do not wonder that this great object of faith is not entirely free from every difficulty: rather wonder that in so mysterious a dispensation as the recovery of a lost world, and by means so astonishing, matters should be so much understood by us as they really are: that such a creature as man, who is but just crept into being, should be able to look round about him, and behold even the surface of the *deep things of God.*

But whatever your conclusions may be, may divine grace confirm and strengthen the faith of all who are in the *right*, and mercifully bring into the way of truth every one of his people who is in error. The hour is hastening fast upon us, when we shall be exercised no more with the mysteries of religion, nor will the blessed Redeemer of the world be any longer the object of our faith, but "we shall see him as he is, and know even as we are known." God grant that in that awful hour, our faith in his sight may not be reproved; but that it may then appear we have given, during the present day of trial, an earnestness of attention to the great demands of duty suitable to their importance, and have diligently set our hearts to a serious concern for the one thing needful. And oh! that God may daily assist every humble soul, that does this more and more with his grace. And "may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Jesus Christ," (1 Thess. iii. 5.)

But for you, who live in the faith of this persuasion (and I trust I speak to numbers of that description,) I must not dismiss the consideration of this important subject without observing, in what a serious and awful manner the perfect conviction of this great truth ought to affect our hearts. Satisfied as we are by a series of

proofs, the most full and incontestible, that the gracious scheme of salvation contained in the gospel was proposed to mankind by no less a being than the Son of God himself: think, I beseech you, with what increased veneration and regard, *we*, above all men, ought to receive this "glorious gospel of the blessed God," (1 Tim. i. 11.) Is then the great Author of our religion really and truly the Son of God? Did he possess "glory with his Father before the world?" And was there no other method in all the plans of Omnipotence for the recovery of our fallen nature, but for this divine character to come down from heaven, to enshrine his glory in a veil of flesh, and by a process the most painful and humiliating, to procure the means of our salvation and happiness? Was there no less being, no angel, equal to the accomplishment of it? Dread Lord! what awful and awakening views ought it to excite in our minds of the importance of that scheme of grace and mercy which he brought; and with what earnestness ought our souls to be engaged in seeking wisdom from above, lest any man fail of this grace of God. Surely, the higher ideas we entertain of the great Author of our faith, the higher must arise in proportion, the duty and obedience we owe him. Let those professors of Christianity who consider Jesus but as a *man*, regard but as the ministry of a *man*, all the interesting doctrines of his religion. For the whole of his gospel being enervated by this persuasion, they cannot, they ought not, indeed, to feel it in the manner it should affect us. But we who, in the person of Jesus, behold the eternal God one with the Father; by this consideration, how exceedingly enforced upon the conscience are all the sanctions of the divine laws! Let it not, therefore, for shame, be ever said, that either in affection or in duty *their* conduct is equal to *ours*; but let us shew the superiority of our faith by a corresponding practice; and let the remembrance of that just and

awakening consideration of the apostle's be never from our hearts, how "impossible it will be in the end for any of us to escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

Particularly, let the awful view of the sad nature of guilt be one of those principles most deeply impressed upon the mind, in the consciousness of the divinity of the great Author of our religion.

Never was there afforded an event equally demonstrable of the dreadful malignity of sin, as when Christ became man, to redeem the world from its influence. The promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, though accompanied with such manifestations of the divine presence, was by no means so strong an indication of the value of righteousness in the sight of God, as when his divine Son appeared in an human form to proclaim it to the world. And of all arguments which can be thought of to interest the human heart to resist the contagion of sin, and to stimulate to purity of life and manners, no doubt that is infinitely transcendant which is drawn from the incarnation, and sufferings, and death of Jesus.

Let the solemn conviction, then, of the great malignity of sin be always connected in our remembrance with the assurance of *his* divine nature, who came to expiate its effects: and if "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," (Habak. i. 13;) if "no evil can possibly dwell with him," (Psalm v. 4;) if he hath given so decided a proof of his utter detestation of sin, as even "to send his Son to be the Saviour of the world," (1 John iv. 14:) What shall I say? If the redemption of sinners could only be effected by means so awful and extraordinary; *shall we* dare to *continue in sin*, after such a manifestation of the divine displeasure against it? "Shall we," who are supposed by virtue of the death of Jesus, to be ourselves "dead unto sin, live any longer therein, (Rom. vi. 12:) God forbid. We are now bought with a price, and are no longer our own;" and therefore we are bound by a peculiar obligation to holiness, and "to glorify God

in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's," (1 Cor. vi. 20.) In a word, *we* who receive the doctrine of a divine Being in our Redeemer, are justly expected, above all others, "to be examples of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and purity," (1 Tim. iv. 12.)

And these duties, let us further remember, are enforced upon us by considerations, if possible, yet more importunate. Every additional proof of God's love must proportionably increase the apprehension of his anger. Every abused mercy is converted into an evil. And what is intended for our happiness, by a misapplication or neglect, must become the source of misery. "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries," (Heb. x. 26, 27.) How ought our souls to be impressed with the conviction of these undoubted truths! For, depend upon it, of all condemnation which may fall upon the sinner at the last day, that Christian's must be the heaviest and most intolerable, who, with the open profession and belief of the divinity of Jesus, hath lived a wicked and disobedient life. "Far better would it have been never to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us," (2 Pet. ii. 21.) And if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 18.)

From the accumulation of evidences with which this great doctrine of the GODHEAD of Christ hath been now proved, I hope no sincere believer in the divinity of his Lord, entertains the least apprehension, as though "that faith" is in any danger of being overthrown, "which was once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3.) That gracious Providence which watched over and guarded it, while a tender plant, from every storm, will not suffer it now (to

use our Lord's own beautiful figure,) when it has waxed a great tree, and its branches have filled the earth, to be cut down and destroyed. By feeble instruments was it first planted, and, under divine protection, the same humble means will in all ages be found sufficient for its security and support.

When the fashionable doctrine of the present hour has had its day, like many others which have sprung up, and for the moment appeared to flourish, but soon died away, "whose very memorial is perished with them," (Psalm ix. 6;) this also will sink and be forgotten. And as the false god could not stand before the ark of the Lord, though repeatedly set in his place, but fell upon his face to the earth, (1 Sam. v. 3, 4;) so this, and all other deviations from the true faith, must ultimately bend to the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus; the "true God (as John calls him) and eternal life," (1 John v. 20.)*

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* As I am now about to take leave of my reader, I would request the favour of him, before our final separation, that he would pause one moment, and ask himself this necessary question? What kind of conviction the evidences which have been now brought before him, in proof of the GODHEAD of Jesus, are likely to leave upon his mind? There is a conviction of the *head*, and which there is great reason to fear, by what appears in the world, is but too common, with which men satisfy their minds on this great subject of the Redeemer's divinity: and this is certainly very attainable by the mere dint of reasoning, and men of no real religion may possess it. But then this is a loose, floating, undetermined principle of belief, which descends not into the *heart*, and neither interests the affections nor influences the conduct, and is productive of no one practical effect on the life. Should your conviction of Christ's GODHEAD, my brother, after all that I have brought before you, operate to no higher purpose than this; forgive me if I add, that according to my ideas your belief, or disbelief, of the important doctrine, is much the same.

When I read the writings of learned and ingenious men, which have been published in proof of the GODHEAD of the Lord Jesus Christ; and see how much may be said, from the mere strength of human reasoning alone, on this divine subject, I very heartily subscribe to the just compliment their labours are entitled to, and add my thanks to the general sufferage of mankind, for their services in defence of the common faith. But after paying all possible respect to the attainments of human learning, I confess that I derive more real, solid satisfaction from the single

But O, what topics of persuasion shall I adopt, so as to leave a lasting impression of these truths upon every

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experimental testimony of some poor unlettered Christian, whom God hath taught on this grand point, than from all the elaborate discourses of the most learned of men. The *one* may, indeed, and will gratify the understanding by the elegance of style, or the manner of the remarks, but the *other*, however plain and unpolished, comes with what the apostle calls "the demonstration of the Spirit and power," and is as much superior to mere abstract reasoning and argument as any ocular proof surpasses the best hearsay evidence whatever. Would you covet, my Christian friend, the possession of this gratifying conviction? seek it then of Him, "from whom alone cometh every good and every perfect gift." Outward evidences you may obtain from the hearing of the ear. Inward testimony is not to be found in books. But every one, the apostle says, "who believeth on the Son of God," that is, who believeth to any effectual purpose of salvation, "hath the witness in himself." Grant, Lord, this witness to all thy people, "that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!" (1 Cor. ii. 5.)

Might I venture to go one step further in the observation, I would say, that according to my apprehension of things, not only this fundamental truth in the Christian system, the Divinity of Christ, but every other article of the holy faith connected with it, is capable, through the gracious teachings of God, of being brought home to the conviction of the mind, with evidences so perfectly clear and irresistible, as to leave no manner of doubt of their existence and reality. Indeed, might I escape the imputation of vanity upon this occasion, (which when it be considered how utterly repugnant every degree of it is to the principles of the Gospel, methinks one might be credited in saying, it is my most earnest wish studiously to avoid,) I would, as modestly as the case will admit of, venture to assert, that there is not an essential article in the creed of a real Christian, but what I can experimentally subscribe to, and have received as ample conviction of, as I think could have been received by the demonstration of sight. Suffer me to explain myself by an illustration. For example. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus, forms a principal doctrine in the faith of a Christian. Now I humbly conceive, that I have the most heartfelt and satisfactory conviction of the certainty of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, equal to any evidence whatever which could be afforded. And I thus prove it. Before the sufferings and death of Jesus, he told his disciples of the necessity of his going from them, and the consequences which should result from his departure. "It is expedient for you (says Christ) that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," (John xvi. 7, 8.) Hence, therefore, I prove the certainty of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, from the certainty of those effects which have followed, agreeably to his promises. And I must insist upon it, with all the confidence of one that contends for a plain matter of fact, that from the very mo-

nind, to be the perpetual incentive of all our conduct? will say with the apostle, " But ye, beloved, building

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nent that the Holy Ghost first descended on the day of Pentecost, to he present hour, in every single instance where the operations of the lessed Spirit have been experienced on the minds of believers; in that reast the Lord hath given as complete an evidence of the resurrection nd ascension of Jesus, as to any of those " to whom he shewed himself live after his passion by many infallible proofs :" and, " who stedfastly ooked toward heaven " in his ascension" as he went up, (Acts i. 3, 10.)

And if it will not be considered going out of my way to remark, I would add yet further, the certainty of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity nay be proved also by the same infallible evidences, to the comfort of ll gracious minds, who will but attend to the operations in their own earts of the Three sacred and eternal Persons of the Godhead. For when Jesus says, " No man can come to me except the Father which ath sent me draw him ;" and the believer finds himself drawn to Christ vith an earnestness and a persuasion which nothing else can satisfy, hat Christ is all-sufficient to his salvation; can any thing be more de- isive in proof, both of the existence and of the operations of the Father? And again, when a soul, conscious of being by nature " dead in tres- asses and sins," finds himself quickened by grace to a new and spiritual ife; and reads in Scripture, among numberless other proofs of the livinity and power of Jesus, that " as the Father raiseth up the dead nd quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," (John . 21;) will not the soul thus quickened, be able to discern the clear traces f the Redeemer's eternal power and Godhead in this distinguished act f grace? And so, in like manner, to that awakened Christian, " in vhose heart the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost," when e is conscious that before this, the enmity of a carnal nature remained; vill higher proof be required of the divinity and operation of the blessed Spirit than his own experience thus affords him? These evidences (and umberless others, which, if needful, might be produced,) are what I all practical and experimental proofs of the doctrine of the Holy Tri- ity, and which if real Christians would but attend to in their own xperience, they would be found more than sufficient, both to check the blasphemous tongue of heresy, and " to quench all the fiery darts of the vicked."

My Christian brother! I add no more, but an earnest prayer to God, hat instead of turning over the many volumes of human arguments vhich have been written for and against these divine things, (which un- ess blessed with an higher Teacher than man, leave the world just where hey found it;) that you would turn over the volume of your own life, nd see what pages there are marked with the teachings of God's Holy Spirit. May God teach you the certainty of the Redeemer's divinity, by hat most decisive of all evidences, his grace in your heart; for then you vill be able to adopt similar language to what the men of Samaria did o the woman at the well: " Now we believe, (say they) not because of hy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed he Christ, the Saviour of the world," (John iv. 42.)

up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," (Jude 20, 21.) And let the expectation of this *eternal life* excite our daily preparation for it. Let the employments of our *future* state become our principal subject of contemplation in the *present*. Let every hour be such as we would wish our last to be. And when the scene of this life is drawing to its end, and the hand of death is closing our mortal eyes for ever, may the last faint accents which tremble on our lips, be in unison with the beginning of our everlasting song: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever," Amen. (Rev. vii. 10, 12.)

SERMONS

ON THE

DIVINITY AND OPERATIONS

OF

THE HOLY GHOST.

PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1826.

MANY of the observations which were offered in the preceding part of this volume, in the new Preface of 1826, on the GODHEAD of CHRIST, might be introduced in this on the GODHEAD of the HOLY GHOST; for the subject is both one and the same. Nevertheless, to avoid prolixity, I would rather refer the Reader to that preface for them, than unnecessarily swell the pages of this by repeating them.

The Persons in the GODHEAD, all distinct as they are, and marked by their distinct operations, as they are set forth in the Holy Scriptures of grace and love to the Church in Christ, constitute but One, and the same Essence in JEHOVAH. And it is the felicity of the Church, when by divine teaching the people of God are not only brought to know the FATHER in his love, the SON in his grace, and the HOLY GHOST in his fellowship: but day by day to live in the spiritual enjoyment of the whole by faith, until they come to the upper brighter world, to realize the whole in open vision. And the man of strong faith will find this an effectual preservative against all the heresies of the present day; just as much as in common life the knowledge and conversation we have with men, totally silenceth all objections that any may bring to our communion with them. Nothing can persuade me that those I see and talk with, and are in the society of from day to day, do not exist; neither can infidels and sceptics tempt me to doubt the reality of my fellowship with the

'ATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST, when by the ivine unction of the SPIRIT, I have communion in the ord, with each, and all, the HOLY THREE in ONE, which ear record in heaven.

I shall not think it needful to dwell much in Preface: nly to beg the Reader that he will never lose sight of ose solemn truths of God; namely, that all divine truths an only be known and believed by divine teaching. As he osecutes the perusal of the present subject, as he was treated by the former, I would very earnestly and affeconately beseech him to wait the leadings and the goings fore him of the LORD. It is blessed reading, and a essed study, when the Almighty Author of Scripture lines both upon his own Scripture, and the hearts of the ople. Here are "the two or three witnesses by which ery word is established," (2 Cor. xiii. 1.) Great GOD! e SPIRIT! condescend to guide the pen of him that rites, and thy people that read, that both may be edified unto all riches, of the full assurance of understanding, to e acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the ATHER, and of CHRIST; in whom are hid all the treares of wisdom and knowledge," (Coloss. ii. 2, 3.)

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
April, 1826.

THE

ORIGINAL PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION,

PUBLISHED IN 1794.

If the motive for the publication of the present Work be demanded, the Author hopes that he shall not be accused of vanity in ascribing it, partly to the kind reception which the public hath been pleased to give to his former volume on the subject of the Godhead of Christ; and partly to the desire of being further useful in the same great cause, during the short period allotted to human labours, within the narrow limits of the present life. There seemed to be a propriety in the addition of the Sermons now offered, to the preceding, being but a continuation of the same important doctrine, and forming a very proper sequel to it. Such as they are, they now appear before the Public; and the Author wishes that both volumes may be considered as a small testimony of his humble endeavours to promote the Great Redeemer's glory in the earth.

He is not without apprehensions, that the unusual length of each of the discourses may be attended with a disadvantage in the perusal. And he should have been glad, had it been compatible with the plan of the work, to have obviated the objection by a division of them. But as the subject treated of, is of a *doctrinal* as well as of a *practical* nature, he thought it might be better to preserve the present arrangement, leaving it to the reader's pleasure to divide or subdivide, as he may find it necessary or convenient.

Though all periods may be supposed favourable for the discussion of subjects of such a solemn and weighty nature as are here examined; yet if one portion of time may be considered as more immediately interesting than another, the present is eminently so; distinguished as it is by a freedom of inquiry, unprecedented in former ages; in which the most sacred truths are attempted to be brought under human decisions. It is in such seasons, therefore, that the believer is called upon to review the evidences of his faith: and it cannot but be peculiarly gratifying, when he sees that the doctrines of the Established Church of this country are founded upon the Scriptures, and derive their sole authority from them. And the Author of this little work, though conscious how very inadequately the subject is treated of in the following sheets, cannot but express an humble hope that no member of the orthodox persuasion will suffer himself to be led away from the faith by any specious arguments of *modern* divinity, until he shall have examined what is here advanced in proof of its doctrines. As he is fully satisfied common candour cannot resist the facts which are here stated in testimony of the truth, even the imperfect manner in which he hath managed the subject, may serve, in some measure, to strengthen the whole argument, by shewing the reader how much more convincing the evidences might have been made to appear, if the matter had engaged some abler pen.

With respect to the praise or censure which may attend the publication, these are extraneous considerations, and not of the smallest consequence in the breast of the Author. For though by no means insensible to a well-earned reputation, yet when he contemplates the boundary of all human applause, the recollection damps every degree of ardour in studying to acquire it. And in the consideration that the hour is hastening (perhaps not far remote) when the hand that is now writing will for ever have ceased its office; it can be no object whether the eye which

then reads shall praise or censure the performance. Both will be alike indifferent "in the land where all things are forgotten." There is, indeed, an ambition of the purest kind, which the Author feels, and for the attainment of which he offers up a prayer of supplication to heaven; that should these feeble essays be so far honoured by Him, of whose divine operations in the heart of man they treat, as to be the instrument of good to a single soul; this will prove a source of satisfaction, which shall outlive the present system of things. And when the writer is *no more seen,* and he that now reads shall have followed him to the dust, the whole will be again remembered in that day, "when the Redeemer shall stand upon the earth."

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,
Jan. 23, 1794.

SERMON I.

ACTS XIX. 2.

We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

THE most animating prospect presented to the mind, in the contemplation of our holy faith, is that view of its doctrines, wherein we see provision made for the wants of nature, and in those points more especially, where we are totally incapable of helping ourselves.

There is no part indeed of Christianity, but what commands our veneration and esteem. We cannot but revere the excellency of its precepts; we admire the beneficence of its laws; and we behold with the most pleasing satisfaction, in the general tendency and scope of its design, how admirably the whole is calculated to impart dignity and happiness to human nature. But what more eminently recommends it to the heart, attracts the attention, and solicits the affections of the LORD'S people, is its happy accommodation to the wants of a fallen race of beings, whose experience daily proves, what Scripture decidedly asserts; that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God," (2 Cor. iii. 5.) Here it is we more immediately discover the benignity of heaven in this gracious dispensation of mercy, and find cause to join issue with the apostle, in ascribing "thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift," (2 Cor. ix. 15.) The blessed gospel of Christ, by representing our nature as sunk beneath the possibility of effecting our own recovery, and proclaiming salvation by CHRIST, as the propitiation for sin, and the Holy Spirit, as the sanctifier of the

ungodly; reveals that covenant of mercy, which can alone answer the necessities of man, in his greatest and best interests. Were these grand principles not included in this system of salvation; had there been no provision made for our recovery from that lapsed state, into which we enter upon our present existence; nor any thing to depend upon, but human ability, in prosecuting the path of duty; however "life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel," (2 Tim. i. 10,) yet heaven would have still appeared distant and inaccessible. We might have beheld it, indeed, afar off, and as a region of happiness infinitely desirable in itself; but the most hardened mind could not, with unshaken constancy, have cherished an hope so presumptuous, as that it was attainable by the efforts of human powers. When, therefore, amidst the doctrines of Christianity, the more peculiar manifestations of grace are discoverable, respecting the efficient means of salvation; the mind, at once freed from all improper timidity and distrust, is encouraged to look up, and behold with an eye of steady faith the habitations of eternity, which are appointed to be the future mansions for the blessed.

But while we derive the highest consolation from this view of religion, so completely answerable as it is to the present situation and necessities of man (indeed the only one capable of affording him support, confidence, and direction in his passage from this world to a better;) it is impossible to consider, but with the most painful concern, that indifference which appears in some, and that infidelity which distinguishes the conduct of others, with respect to those great principles of the gospel. One might reasonably have expected, that a system so gracious, would have been received with open arms by all to whom it was proclaimed; and acknowledged on bended knees in transports of rejoicing. Never surely could it have been thought, that among beings so highly interested in its saving truths, any should be found who

would turn from it with a fastidious disdain, or receive it with a frigid indifference: much less that the plan itself should be arraigned as inexpedient, and the necessity of the measure denied. If any doubts arose, the only apprehension might have been, lest the mercy was too great to be expected, and the objects of it too unworthy to receive it. But to obviate even suspicions of this nature, in compassion to the infirmities of the human mind, that ineffable goodness which proclaimed this system of salvation, condescended at the same time to account for the causes and motives of it, by declaring it to be planned in the counsel of infinite wisdom, and resulting solely from the free and unmerited favour of Almighty God. And this by the way, let it be observed, is the most striking and decisive evidence of its heavenly authority. The incomprehensible nature of the subject, instead of becoming a motive of rejection, proves the very argument for its being received. For if this scheme of grace be so sublime and mysterious, that even when revealed, it infinitely surpasses the fullest grasp of our intellectual faculties; it is evident that the contrivance of it never could have originated in man. What human wisdom cannot now comprehend, human policy never could have proposed. It must have had some higher projector. And therefore the conclusion is unavoidable: in God alone we behold an adequate cause. "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," (Isa. xxviii. 29.)

But how gratifying soever such testimonies may prove to the faithful, still it must be regretted that they become not among all persons equally convincing. There is a perversity in nature since the fall, as fatal to faith as to virtue. Resisting all evidence both human and divine, it acts like an impenetrable barrier upon the mind, and baffles conviction. Affording indeed, a full confirmation of that awful declaration of Scripture, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God

for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The heart of man, in its unregenerate state, is a soil unfavourable to the culture of divine truths. Fertile in the highest degree in every thing merely natural, the seeds of sin and infidelity find immediate root; they spring up in quick vegetation, attain a rapid growth, and like the branches of a wide-spreading tree, extend their deadly shade and fruit in the greatest luxuriance, while plants of holiness and faith, neither nourished from beneath, nor refreshed with the dew of heaven from above, soon wither and die. It is to similar causes that the languishing state of the gospel must be ascribed. Hence that spirit of departure from the pure religion of Jesus, in which one class of men is distinguished by a total disregard to all its important duties; and another, by an open contempt of all its sacred mysteries: and while the *former*, violates with the greatest indifference divine precepts, and seems to hold even the threats of Omnipotence at defiance; the *latter*, by a presumptuous rejection of those doctrines which peculiarly mark the Christian creed, hath reduced its value to a mere nothing, and rendered the whole nugatory and unavailing. What the final issue to such conduct may be, becomes an alarming consideration; nor can the true believer but tremble with painful apprehension for the eventual consequence of such rebellion and ingratitude against God.

But how much soever our fears may be awakened on their account, yet, unhappily, the very persons most interested lie beyond the reach of persuasion. The careless, the busy, and the pleasurable part of the world, can seldom be prevailed upon to listen to topics of religion. They are literally like the deaf adder, "which stoppeth her ears, and will not hearken to the voice of charmers, though charming never so wisely," (Psalm lviii. 5, 6;) with whom the word of truth, if by any means unexpected, finds entrance into the mind, and induces the

momentary impression of seriousness, is not suffered to float long, but is carried away by the first stream of their affections. While on the other hand, those who affect to be distinguished as the friends of *rational* Christianity, will admit nothing into their scheme of religion, but what is capable of being clearly demonstrated to the perfect apprehension of the human understanding. And though evidences the most convincing and unanswerable, in testimony of the faith, have been again and again brought forward; and the sacred repository of Scripture hath been explored with a diligence unexampled in former ages, to bring it to the test; yet so much are persons of this complexion wedded to an overweening opinion of the high powers of nature, and the inexpediency of the gospel as a system of redemption, that they refuse to receive it under any other character than as the guide of moral life. Appeals are made to reason for the rejection of revelation. In the place of Scripture authority, in cases of doubt, human judgment becomes the standard of decision. The word of God is explained by the wisdom of man, and arguments of science are esteemed of equal value with the declarations of holy writ. In consequence of which the mind is enveloped in darkness, and all the avenues by which the light of truth might enter are shut. And can it be an object of surprise, if while an obstinate infidelity to the operations of grace influence the opinion, the aids of grace should be withheld or denied? While things remain in this state it is impossible to benefit either of these different classes of men but by our prayers. We may pray indeed, and we cannot but pray, that God may give them "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," (2 Tim. ii. 25:) but it far surpasses human power, to turn the tide of the passions, and to give a new current to the thoughts of the heart.

But, what then? must we relinquish all attempts, because the prospect is arduous and discouraging? Shall we suffer the blind to wander on the edge of a precipice,

without admonishing him of his danger, because his wayward temper leads him to resist the friendly call? Far be such apathy from the sincere professors of the gospel! Let no real follower of Christ ever feel so unpardonable an insensibility, or want of concern for the salvation of souls! Though there be no doubt but that the whole work of conversion is of God, for it can belong only to him who made the heart, and knows both its weakness and perversity, to change it by his grace; yet the province of duty in man is the same as it ever was. "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear," (Ezek. ii. 7,) the watchmen who are set upon the walls of Jerusalem are commanded never to hold their peace, day nor night. They that make mention of the Lord dare not keep silence, (Isa. lxii. 6.) The precepts of Scripture are perpetually occurring; and they are positive, and not to be accommodated to the taste and manners of the age. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," (Eccles. xi. 6.) And for a suitable encouragement in the work, the promises of God are absolute and unlimited. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," (Isa. lv. 10, 11.) Animated by these considerations, the preachers of the divine word cannot but come forward, in defiance of all difficulty, and with an earnestness and intrepidity suitable to the importance of their commission, deliver the great truths of the gospel; "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," (Coloss. i. 28.)

But while thus engaged in the best of causes, from the laudable concern we feel for the errors of our fellow-creatures, we are no less stimulated to this duty for the preservation of the faith in the breast of the believer. Infidelity, at all times restless and uneasy, hath arisen to an unusual height in the present moment. Not satisfied in the undisturbed possession of its own preposterous tenets, it is become indefatigable in its endeavours to propagate them through the world, and will literally "compass sea and land to make one proselyte." The modesty observed in former ages, in the attacks made upon the church, is now thrown aside, and we behold men with uncovered front come boldly forward to dig up the very foundation stone upon which it is built. It is a day indeed of "rebuke and blasphemy," and to such as confine their observations to second causes, seems to carry with it a portentous aspect of destruction to the religion of our Lord. But though the intention of God in the permission of evil, be not discernible through all the mysterious ordinations of his providence, yet the duty to which it directs is pointed out with a visible hand. When the horn of battle is blown with a more than ordinary blast by the enemy, it is time for the faithful to rouse and put on their armour. Every one, in his respective station, is then called upon to greater vigilance. The *ministers* by their public labours; the *laity* by their private prayers; *all* uniting their utmost exertions in the just defence of our common Zion.

Not that we are concerned for her continuance, as if the faith itself were in any danger of being corrupted or destroyed. The great Author of it hath left behind him such assurance of its permanency, that we cannot but rest in the full persuasion that it shall continue "as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another," (Psalm lxxii. 5.)

The cause is his who gave it, and he can and will protect it, how and by what means he sees proper. Nor

can the ark of God need the feeble arm of man to be stretched forth for its support.

But though regardless as to the ultimate event of all hostilities committed on the faith, we cannot be indifferent to the effect they may have on the mind of the humble believer. To Christians advanced in grace, and who are veterans in the army of the great Captain of their salvation, the hottest assaults of the enemy will occasion no alarm. The weapons of the Spirit with which they are furnished imply the intention of God, that they are to be called forth to warfare, and they are prepared to expect it. For these, therefore, we feel no apprehension. Long disciplined in the duties of their profession, and supported by so powerful an arm as GOD himself, they rest in a well-grounded confidence, that whenever they are summoned to the conflict, *they* shall be enabled to "fight the good fight of faith, and be more than conquerors," through him who strengtheneth them. But our fears are awakened for the safety of our brethren who are but weak in faith, and such as the apostle emphatically calls, "babes in Christ," (1 Corinth. iii. 1;) and "like babes unskilful in the word of righteousness:" such are in the greater danger of being "carried away with every wind of doctrine and craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," (Ephes. iv. 14.) Here, indeed, we cannot but feel an increasing anxiety, lest the rude assaults made against the truth should operate upon their timid and irresolute minds, and cause them to shrink in the day of trial: like those tender plants of the vegetable kingdom, which admit not the smallest touch without recoiling, but from their sensitive nature are apprehensive of violence from every hand. And our fears are proportionably the more excited, as the means of subversion from the faith are more deceitful and alluring, Arguments the less solid, when analyzed, frequently possess a greater speciousness in appearance; as tinselled ornaments will cast around them a false

glare, whilst the pure ore shall seem to have no lustre. The attempts which have been made to bring revelation under the decisions of reason, are among the most dangerous, because the most plausible means of undermining the faith. The evil lurks in disguise, and under a fair form, when a man's own reason is made the umpire in the dispute; and there is something so insinuating in the compliments paid to the human understanding by such arguments as tend to exalt nature, but depreciate grace, that the pride of man knows not how to resist. And he must have been long in the habit of receiving instruction from an higher principle than the imagination of his own mind, who, when the incense of adulation is offered to the shrine of vanity, is in no danger of "being led away with the error of the wicked, and of falling from his own stedfastness," (2 Pet. iii. 17.)

To counteract these effects, and by a method sufficiently comprehensive at once to answer all these important purposes; to awaken if possible the careless; to convince the unbeliever; and to provide for the stability of the faith in the breast of the weaker Christian, should seem to form no inconsiderable branch of duty in the office of public preaching.

Among the subjects of religious discussion, by which those desirable ends, under the divine blessing, may be obtained, none claim equal attention, because none are confessedly so important as those which treat of the great and leading principles of our holy faith. The religion of Jesus (as was before observed,) is peculiarly distinguished as a religion of grace and mercy, suited to a fallen race of beings. And under this character it is that it appears so persuasive and encouraging to the human mind. For the proper apprehension of this benign scheme of salvation (as far as human faculties are commensurate to the apprehension of it, and as far as the principles belonging to it are necessary to be known) the first great point of information which mankind is inte-

rested in is, unquestionably, to have just and becoming conceptions of JEHOVAH in his Trinity of Persons.

Now the Scriptures, which are the only data from whence we can derive any fixed and undeniable rule of knowledge on this important topic, have revealed to us this great and august Being, under certain eminent properties; the sum and substance of whose exalted character, taken in a collected point of view, is, that in the unity of a divine nature, or essence, there are three distinct persons, hypostases, or subsistences, existing, in a manner inconceivable by human comprehension. We are taught to regard *one*, who by way of distinction is called the *Father*, as a being possessed of every attribute which constitute GODHEAD. We are informed also of *another*, called the *Son*, who equally participates in all the essential perfections of the Godhead. And in the same sacred records we read of a *third*, distinguished by the name of the *Holy Ghost*, in whom we trace, as clearly defined, all the characters of GODHEAD. And while to each is distinctly ascribed every possible quality which defines the nature of God, and can belong to none but him; we are carefully instructed to consider, that the sacred Three, by a mysterious unity of essence, in a manner transcending human intellect to conceive, form but the one JEHOVAH. Scripture, in every part, expressly inculcates this doctrine, and seems anxious to impress it on the mind, as a fundamental principle never to be lost sight of, that "the Lord our God is one Lord," (Mark xii. 29.) That this is an incomprehensible mystery, and such as can only be proposed to man, as the object of his faith, is readily granted: and when more is expected from man than an act of faith respecting it, it will be time to demand some further insights into the divine mode of existence: but at present it stands in this light only, as the test of our obedience; and the authority on which it rests is founded in Scripture. And when we recollect that truth does not depend upon our perfect

apprehension, but is in itself a fixed, immutable principle; that which derives its proofs from divine revelation can need no additional testimony with every humble and teachable mind.

To the possession of right notions respecting the GODHEAD, as he is in himself, our next object must be to consider him as he stands (if I may presume so to speak) in his relation to us. I mean in reference to those acts of grace, in which each of the sacred characters of the Godhead is said to have been engaged in the great work of redemption. The Father is represented as having, in love to mankind, "sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," (1 John iv. 14.) The Son is revealed as having assumed our nature for the purpose of salvation, and by a wonderful union of our nature with his GODHEAD, accomplishing those ends for which he became incarnate. And the work of the Holy Ghost is, to render the whole effectual, by the application of the Saviour's merits to the necessities of the sinner, and to regenerate our fallen and corrupt nature by the influences of his divine grace. As the recovery of lost man is thus ascribed to the joint agency of the blessed Three, it certainly becomes the foundation of all duty to have the clearest notions, which the sublime nature of the subject will admit, of the peculiar operations of each. And though our apprehension of personal distinction in the GODHEAD must, from the very nature of things, be limited and imperfect, yet still, under the unerring direction of the revealed word, we shall be enabled to form becoming ideas, and with divine assistance, to cherish the corresponding affections which are proper in man towards God.*

* It may not be improper in the commencement of these discourses, to obviate a popular objection, which hath been pretty generally adopted, that the subject itself is of an uninteresting and speculative nature, attended with much abstruseness and difficulty in the apprehension, and unconnected with any of the practical duties of Christianity. But this is as injurious as it is false. For nothing can be more interesting in its

Of the perfections and attributes of the Father though to be regarded as forming a principal article in

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consequences; nor can any part of revelation have a greater claim and influence upon the conduct of man. It is somewhat worse than folly, to call that object merely speculative, which is calculated to induce proper sentiments, founded upon proper principles, concerning the great objects of religious faith. Will any man say, that it is a matter of indifference how or what we believe? Would it be right to take for granted whatever is proposed, and subscribe to any creed, without inquiring into its principles, according to the measure of religious information afforded? And is it not then an unpardonable neglect of the exercise of our intellectual faculties, to admit of such an indolence in a matter of so high concern? Supposing, for argument's sake, that the leading evidences on which the doctrine itself is founded, are clearly to be discovered in Scripture (as will, I trust, be abundantly shewn in the prosecution of the subject,) that the reception and belief of it becomes an important article of faith, is proposed to us as such, and demands our acquiescence, does not this doctrine include a great branch of duty also? If the redemption of our fallen nature exercised the joint agency of the sacred Three, agreeably to the peculiar operations of each, as revealed in the holy volume, will there not arise from thence a train of corresponding duties, according to the several relations in which the GODHEAD is thus considered? Can any thing more ardently awaken the affection of reverence, than when we look up to the Father as our Creator, or excite equal gratitude in the human mind, to the contemplation of the Son of God as our Redeemer; or can there be a more powerful motive to induce purity of life and manners, than the consideration of the sanctifying influences of the Blessed Spirit; are not all these *practical* duties, and of the highest moment to perform? But how shall they be performed by those who are wilfully ignorant of the peculiar relations of each? who think it a subject speculative and uninteresting to inquire into the motives from whence those particular modifications of duty arise. Who have never considered as they ought the filial veneration due to the Father; the love and duty proper to be exercised towards the Son; and have seldom heard, and in respect to the experience manifested by his influence on the heart, are altogether ignorant "whether there be any Holy Ghost!"

That so mysterious a subject is attended with much obscurity is certain. But if it be important also, the difficulty of investigation becomes no argument against a serious and diligent application to it. And if it be considered moreover, that a right faith can be the only principle to induce a right practice, it will of consequence follow, that in order to prosecute the path of moral rectitude with undeviating steadiness, we must first be careful to take the right steps which lead to it. Of such importance is the subject we are entering upon. May we be "all filled with this knowledge of the divine will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," (Coloss. i. 10.)

every man's faith, is universally allowed and appealed to upon all occasions. And Scripture has so clearly defined him to our conceptions, under those characters which distinguish his person, that it would be superfluous, in the present day of religious knowledge, to bring proofs of what remains unquestionable. Passing by, therefore, the consideration of this subject, as not immediately connected with the object which I have in view; the next in succession would be, to inquire into the testimonies of Scripture respecting the person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. But having already delivered from this place a series of sermons upon his divinity, containing, as I venture to persuade myself, the fullest evidence to the truth of that momentous doctrine, the necessity of this also is superseded. My intention at this time, therefore, is to address you on the third great branch of theology, by discoursing on the Person and operations of the Holy Ghost, which is, indeed, but a continuance of the same faith, and forming an equally important article in the creed of a Christian.

It would be a superfluous service to inform my present audience, that both the personality and works of the blessed Spirit, have been as confidently disputed as the GODHEAD of the Son. Confining his operations to the earlier ages of the church, some have ventured to conclude, that the agency of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men ceased with the apostles, and that no traces of him are to be found in subsequent ages. Whilst others, though admitting his unceasing influence, yet by denying his personality, and reducing him to a mere emanation or energy of the GODHEAD, have adopted an opinion subversive of the true faith. But what is still more wonderful, there have been men who have advanced to such daring heights of profaneness, as not only to question, but even to ridicule, his sacred operations upon the human heart; considering them as a subject fit only to

engage the belief of superstitious minds, and treat them as the reveries of the enthusiast and fanatic.*

Thus while the great mass of mankind are too much

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* There is hardly an instance to be met with of a more wilful perversion and abuse of language, than in the constant misapplication of those words, when used towards religious persons as terms of reproach. They are so generally understood in this sense, that the very name of an *Enthusiast* carries with it the idea of a weak and silly character. And yet, strange to tell! there is not a man upon earth, who feels himself animated, in the pursuit of the particular object of his wishes, but what more or less may be considered as an enthusiast. The word itself is derived from the Greek Ενθεσιαζης, *numine afflatus;* and when applied to the follower of religion, can only mean a more than ordinary attention to this great object of his regard. But if it be the excess of application, that subjects a man of this kind to ridicule, then the amateur of any science is as justly exposed to it as he is; only with this vast difference in favour of godliness, that as the religious man's passion is confessedly allowed by every one to be infinitely more important and interesting than any other; an excess of attention, if it be possible, must of consequence be less faulty, and not meriting equal reprehension. "The man," as a sensible writer, whose name I do not immediately recollect, expresses it, "whose fire is kindled from the rhetoric of Tully; who travels over high mountains to kiss the dear ground that Marcus Tullius Cicero walked upon; whose soul would be so animated as to be ready to burst, if he could see the rostrum from whence Cicero poured forth his thunder of eloquence;" this man shall be esteemed a being of superior order, and as one who possesses a larger soul than the common horde of men; but he who, in the contemplation of that "love of God which passeth knowledge," feels an animation of the purest nature; to whose awakened mind the recollection of his Redeemer's sufferings, shall call tears from his eyes, and heave the sigh of sorrow in his heart; this man is to be branded with the name of *Enthusiast*, and classed among the most senseless of men. Alas! what a proof of human depravity! Horace, and Virgil, and Cicero, would hardly have been known to the present day, had not a laudable spirit of enthusiasm in their admirers, preserved them from the ravages of time by the recommendation of their beauties. If the having a more awakened attachment than others towards the Divine Being, who, strictly speaking, is the only object in the universe deserving the affection of his creatures; and if the being animated with this divine love, manifesting itself in all the instances of duty (which is the only infallible evidence of its reality,) if these things constitute an enthusiast, would to God that I were the greatest enthusiast alive! The reproach of men, to a mind thus occupied, would be as little regarded as their praise would be insignificant. The reverse of that proposition of Scripture would be a rich equivalent, "what is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God."

absorbed in the several objects of their pursuits, to feel themselves at all interested in the question, there are multitudes, and even among professors of the gospel, who with respect to all the efficacious purposes of believing, like the Ephesians to whom Paul preached, have yet to learn "whether there be any Holy Ghost."

If the truth of this great doctrine depended upon a few passages in Scripture of equivocal meaning, and had not been so copiously insisted upon as it is in every part of the New Testament; some apology might be made for the incredulity of mankind respecting it. Though even then, the readiness would be unaccountable with which the belief of it is relinquished, fraught as it is with matter of the most consolatory nature, both to churches and individuals. But when it is recollected, that Christ himself is the author of this doctrine; that in that last conversation which he held with his disciples, he discoursed upon it in the most familiar and express terms, declaring, that the great necessity of his departure was, to send the Holy Spirit to enlighten the minds of his people; and that when he came, he "should abide with them for ever; should dwell in them, and be in them, teach them all things, and guide them into all truth," (John xvi. 13.) And in conformity to these declarations of Christ, we find the apostles, in all their preaching and writings, perpetually dwelling on the same doctrine; assuring their converts, that the grand evidence of a true faith was this inward testimony of the Holy Ghost; when "the Spirit itself bare witness to their spirits that they were the children of God," (Rom. viii. 16;) and demanding, in the most earnest manner, as the only infallible criterion of the reality of their Christian principles, "whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed," (Acts xix. 2.) Is it possible that any point in the gospel can be more clearly ascertained and assured to us than this? To confine the operations of the blessed Spirit to the first ages of the church, and to conclude

that because the *extraordinary* influence ceased, when it became no longer necessary, the *ordinary* influence which is always needful, is also withdrawn; what a contradiction would this be to Scripture, and to all the gracious declarations of the divine word! As if all the expediency of this blessed gift of God, was for the *public* establishment of the church, and had no respect to the *private* sanctification of every believer. As if the world was no longer in a state of corruption, and mankind needed not the influence of grace to purify the disorders of the heart and passions. On the bare supposition of which, all the comfortable and encouraging promises of divine strength to support human infirmity, and of grace to help in time of need, would be done away, and the whole become fabulous and without meaning. Blessed be God! matters depend not upon so precarious a tenure. Thousands, who have felt and experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, in awakening them from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness, have given their uniform testimony to this doctrine, and in the most satisfying of all evidences, the change wrought in their hearts and lives has afforded the fullest proof that they were "born of God."

Perhaps no doctrine of our holy faith has been less regarded, though certainly there is none, within the whole compass of public preaching, more necessary to be frequently insisted upon than this. The method by which I mean to be guided in the discussion of it, will be to examine into the proofs of the person, divinity, and operations of the Holy Ghost. In my endeavours to accomplish this purpose, it will be expedient to go over the sacred ground of Scripture in quest of evidences which may at once be convincing and satisfactory. In doing which (as upon the former occasion, when discoursing on the GODHEAD of Christ) I disclaim all testimony but that of Scripture. In my esteem, it is not only an unnecessary service to aim at strengthening,

by secondary arguments, the primary proofs of holy writ; but it is forming an alloy, and that of the basest kind, to mingle human opinions with divine truths. The sacred book of God can need no collateral testimony from man. And the attempt to give weight to the proofs of Scripture by such means is no less vain, than the hoping to swell the bulk of a mountain by the addition of a grain of sand, or to increase the tide of the ocean with a drop of the bucket. Human authority, like human nature itself, is precarious and evanescent; but "the word of God shall stand for ever," (Isa. xl. 8.)

Conscious also of the difficulties attending all researches into the sublime subject I am about to enter upon; and aware, how much the natural darkness of the present state and the blindness of the human mind will obstruct perception and cloud the powers of vision; in speaking of "the deep things of God," (and every passage of Scripture relating to the person and offices of the blessed Spirit, must eminently be so considered,) I earnestly desire to divest myself of all presumptuous reasonings upon so awful a subject, and pray for the teaching of the same Spirit to enlighten the darkness of my mind, and to rule and direct my heart in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Like one who treads on holy ground, I would put off, as much as possible, every thing of an unhallowed nature, and bid passion, prejudice, and all the vanities of the world be still, while attending to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And that we may be taught of thee, do thou, O Eternal Being, on whose incomprehensible essence and gracious operations we are presuming to contemplate, visit our souls with thy grace! "Our eyes are unto thee, who givest wisdom to the simple," and to the humble, "knowledge and discretion." Deign, blessed Spirit of Truth! "to guide us into all truth:" reveal thy gracious ways to us at this time; that we may "know the things which are freely given to us of God!"

Preparatory to our subject, I would desire permission to make a few observations, which will not, I trust, be deemed improper or foreign to our purpose, by way of ascertaining the province of reason, respecting her abilities in the investigation of the truths of revelation. By stating the limits of the one, we shall be better able to form a judgment of the reverence which is due to the other, and discover the line which is drawn, where the reasoning of man should end, and a complete acquiescence in the revealed word of God begin.

The sum and substance of the gospel, collectively considered, is the promulgation of a scheme of grace to man, for the purpose of his salvation. In this divine system, certain doctrines are proposed, as the great objects of faith, which not only surpass the utmost stretch of the human imagination to have conceived, but even when revealed, baffle all the powers of reason to investigate and explain. And the cause is obvious. God is an infinite being. Now an infinite being, under every idea in which he is considered, must be incomprehensible to a finite capacity: for the faculty of perception in man, cannot be commensurate to the object contemplated, which is God. To say, therefore, that reason, because it cannot comprehend what is mysterious in the divine nature (and which is proposed not as the subject of comprehension, but as the object of faith) is authorized to reject it, would be to deny what was before demonstrated to be true; and in effect to assert, that reason is an *infinite* capacity in man, equal to the investigation of an *infinite* subject, which is absurd. Let us only admit the truth of any one of the mysterious doctrines, revealed to us, of the divine nature. For example, suppose that of the unity of three sacred persons in the Godhead. Now if reason presumes to exercise her powers upon this incomprehensible subject, and concludes from analogy, because nothing in nature, that comes within the limits of her observation, possesses this plurality of per-

sons in an unity of essence, the same reasoning extends to the Divine Being; this would be attempting what we before proved to be impossible, namely, judging of *infinite* properties by *finite* principles; a matter impracticable and vain. So that when it is said, Reason rejects the doctrine of the Trinity,* because of its incomprehensible nature, it is charging reason falsely. She has never done it. Pride, ignorance, and vanity may have assumed her name, and concealing themselves under her respectable character, may have confidently taken her seat, and decided upon subjects beyond her province; but Reason herself has never ventured further, in speaking on the mysterious points of religion, than to adopt the maxim of the apostle, declaring the hope that is in believers, "and that with meekness and fear," (1 Pet. iii. 15.) From these premises, I assume this for a principle perfectly incontrovertible, that as reason is a *finite* quality of the mind, it is incompetent to form any conclusion on an *infinite* subject, and consequently never has been, nor can be, able to explore "the deep things of God."

Let us next proceed to inquire, how far her province extends, when under the guidance of revelation.

The apostle Paul, when speaking of the Christian religion in his comprehensive manner, more than once calls it "the wisdom of God in a mystery," (1 Cor. ii. 7;) "the mystery of his will," (Ephes. i. 10;) "the mystery

* Nothing can be more childish, and inconsistent with the candid disquisition of any topic, than that ridiculous play of words, which leaves the substance of the argument, to contend about the shadow of it; and instead of examining the truth of the subject in question, cavils at the mode and terms of explanation. Of this nature is the objection which hath been made against the word *Trinity*. As if the *word*, and not the *doctrine* it is intended to express, became the matter of dispute. But is it not sophistry in the extreme to enter upon such arguments? If the doctrine itself be allowed, the term made us of, which can only be considered as explanatory, will of consequence follow. And it must be evident to every man of candour, that it is the doctrine, and not the mode of expression, for which we contend.

hid from ages," (Colos. i. 26;) and "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world," (1 Cor. ii. 7.) And the apostle Peter, in the same manner, after expatiating upon the mysterious nature of that scheme of grace, which "the prophets searched diligently after," when "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify of his sufferings, and the glory which should follow," declares, that these were things "which the angels desired to look into," (1 Pet. i. 10.) A revelation, therefore, distinguished by such characters, and exciting the intellectual faculties of the angelic order to look into, cannot be supposed in all points, to be adapted to human apprehension. Hence it should seem, in the very first view of the argument, that however confessedly plain the Christian doctrine might be in the practical parts of it, there would be "some things in it hard to be understood;" certain particularities above the clear comprehension of creatures who are appointed "to walk by faith and not by sight:" in which the understanding of man is supposed to submit to the appointment of God, and reason condescends to become the pupil of revelation. Nay, further, the very idea of a revelation certainly implies some deficiency in reason. For if God, who is the author and giver of both, to the natural powers implanted in the mind of man, hath thought fit to superadd some more peculiar manifestations of his will, respecting the duty incumbent upon him to his Maker: this pre-supposes, that man's intuitive faculties were of themselves not sufficient for this purpose, and consequently reason, considered before too weak to correct and amend. Hence, upon all occasions, reason must be a secondary and subordinate principle to revelation. The great objects religion proposes to the view, are beheld through the intervention of a medium; seen (as the apostle strongly expresses it) "through a glass darkly," (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) And this entirely corresponds

with what the Scripture hath revealed, concerning the nature of faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Heb. xi. 1.)

But we may proceed yet further in the argument, and from the *mutability*, as well as from the weakness of reason, clearly demonstrate its insufficiency to determine the measure of religious faith.

Upon the presumption, that this faculty of the mind is of itself competent to judge of divine things, and that it never can be a duty to admit any proposition, as an article of faith, but what reason shall be able to explain and approve; it would follow, that this great director of the mind and conduct must be a steady and unvarying principle; as firmly attached to the truth as steel is to the attracting magnet, and consequently is never different in a single instance. For truth, being in its nature unchangeable, would then necessarily affect mankind, and be universally the same in all. But, alas! such is the diversity of this faculty of the mind, that perhaps we are not more distinguished in person, than we are in the variety of our opinions. Nay, it is not only a variable principle, considered as to its different operations among mankind, but even in ourselves capricious, uncertain, often opposite to and inconsistent with itself. What inconstancy do we frequently discover in our sentiments, when reasoning upon men and things, perpetually changing and differing from ourselves! One day assuming an opinion with all the warmth of conviction; and the next, very possibly, dismissing it with all the marks of disapprobation. And is such an unsteady, fickle principle, proper to be the sole arbitress of divine truths? Is it with such a scanty line we would presume to fathom the "deep things of God?" Those who seriously imagine (and I am supposing all along, that in stating the limits of reason I am arguing with persons of this complexion) that this faculty of the mind is a sufficient director, in ascertaining the proportion of religious belief; and that man, as an accountable creature, cannot be condemned

for rejecting what his reason is unable to demonstrate, certainly draw conclusions from false premises. Unquestionably, in whatever God has thought proper to propose to man as a rule of duty, either of faith or practice, the authority of the lawgiver becomes the only standard to determine the fitness of the law. Reason has its boundaries in the divine science (if I may so call it) of religion. And there may be cases where reason can have no certain assurances of apprehension to proceed on, and yet it shall be a positive duty to obey. It was an instance of this kind which occasioned that memorable faith of the patriarch Abraham, which is handed down to us with such marks of divine approbation; because that "against hope, he believed in hope." For in the duty enjoined him of the sacrifice of his son, reason revolted at the divine command, as inconsistent with the divine promise respecting the posterity of Isaac. And when Isaac was laid on the altar, and the hand was stretched forth to slay him, it baffled all the powers of reason to conceive the possibility of completing the deed, and yet that the promise of blessings, which God had made concerning him, should be fulfilled. His intentional acquiescence in the divine command was therefore the sacrifice of reason at the shrine of faith; and this became such a glorious instance of obedience as hath deservedly raised to the patriarch a monument of praise, which will stand in the church of Christ an example of imitation to endless ages.

From these considerations I venture to conclude, that reason, though among the properties of our nature the noblest and the best, and though it raises man to that exalted rank in the scale of existence which he holds in the universe, is nevertheless incompetent in divine things to be the guide of faith. Her province reaches not so far. Her office is more humble. As the handmaid to revelation, her duty is to follow with becoming reverence the footsteps of her mistress, to possess a just sense of her own inability, to acquiesce in whatever is proposed

to her upon proper authority; and wherever the subject exceeds her powers of clear apprehension, to be thankful for those little portions of it which she is capable of receiving. Conscious that whatever imperfections may appear, these are in herself, and not in the divine subjects contemplated. As the inability of beholding bright and dazzling objects does not proceed from any defect in the objects themselves, but only from our weakness of vision; so in like manner, the great truths of religion, which appear mysterious to us, are so from no other reason, but because our capacities are inadequate to their comprehension. But as the eye of the body, though incapable of beholding the face of the sun, when shining in his brightness, will yet, from the reflection of his rays, be excited to the full use of its faculties, and derive ability to perceive the objects around; so the eye of the mind, through the medium of revelation, will be qualified to gather sufficient information for all the purposes intended, from the great source of light in the intellectual world, which without such intervention, would become too bright a contemplation for a being merely human to endure. It is to revelation, therefore, that reason must have recourse for assistance, and to her submit the supreme direction of her conduct. And under her tuition we shall find, that though the powers of reason in the acquirement of religious knowledge be circumscribed within scanty limits, yet her office becomes neither inconsiderable nor unimportant. Her duty is to examine into the certainty of the truths proposed; to weigh maturely the nature of the evidence with which they are supported; and in their investigation to use the same diligence as if no superior director were necessary to guide the judgment. And while man thus employs the understanding God has vouchsafed him, with the humility of a dependent, short-sighted being; while a sense of human weakness prompts him to be continually supplicating divine aid; and he walks with that caution, through the mysterious paths of the sacred science of

revelation, which the present dark and doubtful state he is in requires; being neither so credulous to decide hastily, nor so sceptical to refuse all conviction; he is then certainly exerting the distinguishing gift of reason to the utmost of her powers, and may humbly hope, upon every occasion, where reason becomes incompetent to guide, revelation will be ready to direct, and the deficiency of man will be supplied by the instruction of God. As the star which guided the wise men in their journey, while earnest in their inquiries to find out the new-born Saviour, went before them in the very moment they needed the benevolent director, until it came and stood over the spot, where the great object of their pursuit was; so may we hope some ray of grace will direct our steps in the trying seasons of uncertainty, while exploring the divine truths of religion, that we may see the things "which are freely given to us of God." But unless the light of heaven illumines the darkness around in the very midst of the fullest testimonies of the truth we shall see them not. Our case will be exactly similar to the servant of the man of God, who saw not the horses and chariots of fire with which the mountain was filled, though they encompassed him on every side, until the Lord opened his eyes at the instance of the prophet's prayer. Then, and not before, his powers of vision were quickened to their office, and he saw things as they really were.

These preliminary observations will not, I hope, be without their use to the better apprehension of the very mysterious topic which solicits attention in the subsequent discourses. Being upon the threshold of the subject, where the greatest difficulties and discouragements are generally found, I thought it might tend to the greater facility of admission, to remove the brambles from the door. It only remains, for the present, to repeat our prayers, and beg of God to give to every one who enters in, the hearing ear, and the seeing eye; that we may "see the wondrous things of God's law."

SERMON II.

ACTS xix. 2.

Whether there be any Holy Ghost.

THE more I consider the very sublime nature of the subject we are entering upon, the more I feel a conscious insufficiency to its prosecution; and am only animated to persevere by an humble and depending hope, that the light of heaven will precede and direct the path to be taken. Indeed, under all discouragements, I console myself with this reflection, that the divine "strength is made perfect in" human "weakness;" nor will the incompetency of the instrument be of the least disadvantage, when "it pleases God" as "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*

* It is a delightful consideration to the preachers of the word of God, in the faithful discharge of their arduous employment, (and should any of the sacred order honour these feeble essays with a perusal, I hope none will censure the suggestion), that the success of their services doth not depend upon themselves, or the eminence of their labours, but on the blessing of Him who alone can make them "able ministers of the New Testament." He is graciously pleased sometimes to make use of the most unlikely and unpromising instruments to accomplish his purposes; and as the apostle speaks, by "foolish things to confound the wise, and by weak things to confound the mighty." And we have his own divine promise for our encouragement, that "he will prosper the word whereto he sends it," (Isa. lv. 11.) "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces," (Jer. xxiii. 29.) The metaphor is bold and nervous, and as expressive as any sensible image of material substances can be, to represent an immaterial principle. But what figures from nature are capable of conveying an adequate idea of the powerful effects of spiritual agency? Fire, indeed, is of the most subtle and penetrating quality, entering into all bodies, and being, perhaps, a part of all, the universal pabulum by which God is pleased to work in the formation and support of the universe. Yet when used in allusion to that energy of energies (if I may so express it)

In support of that important doctrine which is to be the subject of these discourses, suffer me to remind

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by which the great Father of spirits acts upon the human soul, it is too inert in its operations to afford any thing more than a feeble comparison. Nor can the image of a *hammer* breaking *the rock in pieces,* but faintly describe that astonishing property of divine grace, by which the stony heart of man, which in a state of nature, like the rock, resisteth all impressions, is made an heart of flesh, softened, and become susceptible of devout feelings. As these effects clearly surpass all human powers, and are such as nothing less than Omnipotency can accomplish; it is evident that the event of the operation is alike independent both of the power or weakness of the instrument by which God condescends to work. These in their very nature are passive. Can the instrument or means be said to be passive, and simply no more than the means for bringing about the sacred designs of the divine will? Let no man, then, despise "the day of small things." How weak and imperfect soever we are in ourselves, our sufficiency is of God. And they who go forth in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of his righteousness only, will find a blessing following their labours, where perhaps they least expected it; and will literally experience (however paradoxical it may have been thought) the same happy consequences from their ministry, which the apostle Paul speaks of with so much satisfaction to have found in his: that when they are weak, then are they strong; when from a deeper conviction of their own infirmities, they have been led to feel more sensibly the necessity, and to implore more earnestly the aids of divine grace; they have then more sensibly experienced "the power of Christ resting upon them." (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.)

Since I have ventured to say so much upon this subject, it may not be amiss to go further and observe, that not only by the feeblest means, are the greatest instances of grace sometimes wrought, but passing by, what may seem to us to be more immediately calculated for the execution of his purposes, we see that God delights (if the expression be warrantable) in making choice of such instruments, as to human apprehension appear to be very far from being competent or adapted to his service. Thus, for example, in the case of St. Paul's conversion. The first manifestations of grace towards this man were granted of the Lord himself by a voice from heaven; and according to our notions of things, we should have thought that this must have superseded the necessity of every other mode of communication from heaven, and that after such a display of glory as was vouchsafed him in that awful transaction, there could be needed nothing more to complete the design of the divine mercy upon him.—But no—the Lord was pleased to begin the great work of conversion in the apostle by means supernatural; the carrying of it on, he reserved to the ordinary method of his grace, and appointed a poor timid disciple of Damascus, Ananias, to this duty. One, who had but lately himself been converted to the faith which he was now commissioned to preach. And though it be probable that many of the apostles were at this time at Jerusalem, yet was this feeble

you, that it is the holy Scripture only to which we are to appeal: so that whatever imperfections shall accom-

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instrument selected to finish the work of God in this vessel of mercy, whom he had chosen to be of the most extensive usefulness in his church. So in the instance of Cornelius, an angel is personally employed to assure him of the divine favour. But though coming expressly from heaven for this purpose, and delivering his commission as a prelude to the further manifestation of God's will, he is not permitted to be the messenger of salvation. That ministry was reserved for one of like passions with himself, and Peter must be sent for, from a considerable distance, to complete the gracious errand of mercy, and to tell him words whereby he and all his house might be saved, (Acts xi. 14.) Thus mysterious, and at the same time full of condescension, are the ways and works of God! And although reserving to himself as the efficient cause of all, what he and he only can perform, the giving energy and success to every ministration; yet has he manifested his pleasure on these and numberless other occasions, to convey his grace through channels of imperfection and unworthiness.

And here it would be an injury to our subject, not to remark how graciously the divine benignity is displayed in this instance of his love, by appointing *men*, and not *elect angels*, to be the ministers of his word. Had he commissioned the heavenly host to preach to us the doctrines of salvation, as they never knew what it was to offend God, nor ever felt in themselves the misery of sin, and the happiness of being rescued from it; even *angels* would have been deficient in those topics of persuasion which we now possess, arising from the experience of a corrupt nature and redeeming grace, and all the interesting arguments of fellow-feeling. But when one sinner, awakened by the Holy Spirit of the Lord, is sent to another sinner to speak to him words of salvation; what an animation of discourse may be expected from his lips, when "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

If I may presume to add to a note, which has already far exceeded what was originally intended, I would humbly beg leave to enforce these considerations on the hearts of my brethren in the ministry (as I earnestly desire to feel the full impression of them on my own) not only by way of inspiring the greater confidence, but of exciting the greater diligence also in an office so sacred, as that which confers upon us the high honour of "being fellow-labourers with God." (1 Cor. iii. 9.)

If the arguments which have been stated are full of encouragement to the feeblest preachers of the word, it should be remembered no less, that the same motives which encourage, do as loudly call to labour. And since we are intrusted with this awful commission, set apart from every thing of a secular nature, in order, no doubt, that we may attend with increasing studiousness and application to the cure of souls, and as dying preachers speaking to dying hearers on the momentous concerns of eternity; how animated ought we to be in "holding forth the word of life!" It must be confessed, indeed, that when we look into ourselves and perceive the corruptions dwelling in us, the lively sense thereof, may

pany our researches through the sacred volume, they will be altogether single and detached, and easily separable from the great truths themselves which are there contained. The pure word of God possesses somewhat so peculiarly its own, that it requires no great depth of penetration to discern it by its distinguishing features. All that is expected from you, therefore, in the admission of the testimony which shall be produced, (as nothing is to be considered as evidence but what may be clearly proved to be taken from this unerring source of truth) will be, that you receive it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe," (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

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well damp the ardour of our minds, when ministering in holy things, and recommending to others what operates so faintly upon our own hearts: yet since such is the infinite condescension of God, as to take creatures so utterly unworthy into his service; since we plainly perceive in many instances, that it is by such he is pleased to work; and the weakness or unworthiness of man becoming no impediment, when commissioned to the accomplishment of the will of God; the argument, instead of being lessened, is increased, and additional incentives arise on every side to make us more zealous in the service of the sanctuary. With considerations, therefore, so powerful and interesting in view, it is hardly possible to be indolent or inattentive. It must argue a very unthinking or a very unfeeling heart, to bring to the Lord's service a coldness of affection. And if we can see our people dropping off continually one after another, into their eternal state, without being interested in events so awful, what correspondence does such an insensibility bear to the character of ministers of Christ? No doubt, the most animated preachers have cause to lament the deadness of their affections in divine things, and to mourn in secret over the recollection of the unprofitableness of their ministry. But what shall be said for us, if an evident lukewarm attention to the duties of our function too plainly indicate, that we are neither in earnest ourselves nor desire to excite an earnestness in our people? Pardon me, my brother in the service of our common Master, whosoever thou art, before whom these lines appear; pardon the freedom of language induced by the consideration of a subject so infinitely interesting to us both, and involving in it a trust of the highest consequence and responsibility. May God, by his Holy Spirit, quicken your heart and mine to an increasing diligence in all the duties of our sacred calling, that by "attendance to reading, to exhortation, and doctrine, by meditating upon these things," and "giving ourselves wholly to them, we may save both ourselves and them that hear us," (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

I desire your attention no further; nay, I solemnly charge you to grant it me no further, than as the doctrine proposed shall appear to your apprehension fully confirmed by the divine oracles. No man can be too scrupulous upon subjects of such infinite moment, when he rests the decision of his final state upon this supreme authority alone.

It should moreover be remembered, (and it is a caution which cannot be too frequently brought before the mind) that we expect no more from the book of God on the abstruse points of religion, than what matters so confessedly sublime and mysterious will admit. Clear and perfect conceptions of infinite properties, do not come within that sphere of understanding, to which finite capacities are limited. And to prevent the difficulties necessarily connected with the subject we are engaged in, from becoming obstructions in our way, was one great object intended by the preceding sermon, which was merely preliminary to this purpose.

Nay, even that portion of knowledge which we are capable of acquiring from the written word, in the divine science of religion, is not attainable without a superior direction. To the application of man must be added the grace of God, or rather, this grace must precede our inquiries, before we can know the things "which are freely given to us of God." Our knowledge and discovery of divine truths, is progressive, according to the ability imparted. We can discern somewhat of God in his works, by the powers of nature: our *reason*, like the faint rays of a small taper, throws some weak light around the darkness of the human mind, just enough to afford a few glimmerings, but at the same time leaves the objects still confused and indistinct. The knowledge which we obtain from *revelation*, is like the rising of the morning star, and the dawn of day scattering the mists of night, and dispelling the gloom of the hemisphere. But the beams of divine grace, which

the great Luminary of the intellectual world pours upon the soul, fill it with brightness surpassing the splendour of the meridian sun, and enlighten the understanding to the clearest apprehension attainable, in this life, of "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) And the diversities of operations on the human mind, though "all wrought by that one, and the self-same Spirit," result from his spontaneous and unmerited bounty, "dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 6, 11.) While, then, we preserve the remembrance, that a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of religion cannot be attained by man in the present life, from the incompetency of his faculties of apprehension; and that even revelation will lose its instruction upon the mind, unless the great truths of it be opened and explained by the operations of the Holy Spirit; we shall learn to form our expectations accordingly, and assign to each its proper department. This view of things indicates what we are to look for from man, and what must be sought for from God. That all the *former* can do, is to bring before us the important truths of the gospel, and place them in an advantageous light for our inspection. Here his utmost ability ends, for he can go no further. To render them effectual to the great purposes intended, can only be the work of the *latter*. This is his sole prerogative. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," (James i. 17.) And hence (as the apostle in a beautiful figure observes) "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

My province of duty upon the present occasion will, I apprehend, be fully answered, when in an humble dependance on divine aid, with a diligence proportioned to the nature of the solemn subject we are upon, and with the integrity becoming an accountable servant, to whom a very high degree of responsibility is annexed;

I shall have explored the holy Scriptures for their testimony to the truth, and brought it before you. And your duty will be manifested, in first seeking grace and direction from above, and then bringing to the discussion of a subject so infinitely solemn and interesting, a mind free from prejudice, and open to the conviction of truth, as it shall appear in the sacred word. And may that great and almighty Being who is the sacred subject of our contemplation, and of whom we presume to speak, be so graciously present with us in all his holy influences, that "our gospel may not come to you in word only, but also in power," (1 Thess. i. 5;) that "your faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 5.)

In the arrangement of the subject according to the plan proposed, our first attention must be directed to examine into the evidences of the existence of the blessed Spirit. "Whether (as the text expresses it) there be any Holy Ghost." For it is a maxim, as fully justified in reason as Scripture; "he that cometh to God must believe that he is," (Heb. xi. 6.) The knowledge of effects, pre-supposes the existence of causes. We cannot with propriety lead the mind into a train of reasoning arising out of any conclusions, before we have fairly established the certainty of the premises, on which the conclusions are founded. The object of my present discourse, therefore, will be, to collect and bring before you what the sacred word hath revealed concerning the blessed Spirit in the first ages of the world, and previous to our divine Lord's ministration in the flesh.

This branch of the subject will not be the least difficult. All the early revelations from God are faint and obscure. The supreme wisdom had some object, no doubt, in view, in imparting the information of himself in those days, with such a sparing hand, and causing the sacred books to be indited as they are. And among other purposes, why may it not have been intended to

call up the intellectual faculties of the human mind, to greater exertions in the study of them? For though, by the most diligent search, we cannot "find out God to perfection:" yet it furnishes a continual source of delight, to observe the least manifestations of him "whose way (as it is elegantly expressed) is in the sea, whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known," (Psalm lxxvii. 19.)

But added to this consideration, the subject becomes the more intricate, from the distinct nature of that part of it which is to engage our particular attention. To discourse upon the ways and works of God, either in the world of nature, of providence, or of grace, would be (comparatively speaking) practicable and easy, under that assistance of revelation, with which we are blessed in the present day of evangelical knowledge. For whether we considered God *abstractedly*, in his own divine perfections; or *relatively*, under the several characters in which he is represented to us; yet while we confined our observations to the *undivided essence* of the Supreme Being, without having respect to the *individuality* of the sacred persons in the Godhead, our contemplation would not be attended with those difficulties, which a peculiar reference to each must unavoidably occasion. But when we enter upon a nearer and more intimate investigation of the specific characters in the GODHEAD, as manifested in the gracious scheme of man's redemption, which engaged the joint agency of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and attempt to delineate the particular operations, by which either is defined: this necessarily begets a greater mysteriousness of subject, and brings the mind to the utmost verge we can advance to, without being lost in the immensity of the contemplation.

To render our attention as little complex as possible, and in exploring the Scripture, that our path may be no more circuitous than is absolutely necessary; I shall

confine my observations to those points, which, by their evident relation to the Holy Ghost, have a direct tendency to explain the certainty of the existence of his person, and the nature of his operations.

And here it should seem proper, in conformity to order, to take notice of the several *names* and *titles* by which the Holy Ghost is distinguished, before we proceed to the consideration of his works. But as these will meet us with more propriety under another part of the subject, when we come to the proofs of his GODHEAD in the express characters and properties ascribed to him, I shall wave the consideration thereof at present. It will be sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that mention is made, in both testaments of Scripture, of one, who is distinguished by several names and titles, all sufficiently demonstrative of his existence, and accurately defining an identity of character. For whether he be called the Holy Ghost, the Eternal Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of God, or of Christ: these are all but so many different appellations of one and the same Being; nor can any possible mistake arise (unless by a wilful perversion of terms) in apprehending to whom these names are applied. Without dwelling therefore, at present, on a matter so very obvious, I shall proceed to the inquiry proposed, what the sacred records have revealed concerning the ministry of this blessed Spirit, in the early ages of the world.

The first traces or footsteps (if I may so speak) which we discover of this august Being, appear as early as the creation. Before " the worlds were framed by the word of God, and things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear, " (Heb. xi. 3:) when the whole mass of inanimate matter lay in one undistinguished chaos, " without form and void;" we are told that " the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," (Gen. i. 2.) And that this is said, in a particular allusion to the Holy Spirit is evident from other

parts of Scripture, which ascribe the works of creation (in common with the Father and the Son) to his immediate agency. This view of his operations, however, does not come within the object of my present pursuit, but will be abundantly manifested under another part of the subject. The single question of discussion now is, "whether there be any Holy Ghost." And this will be very fully and satisfactorily answered, from the proofs of his existence, and ministry, as they appear in the records of the Old Testament.

Passing by the works of creation, if we prosecute our researches in the subsequent ages, among the events in which the visible effects of his ministry are discoverable through all the departments, both of providence and grace; we shall find a subject opening to our view, the most solemn (yet pleasing) which the imagination can conceive: the most sublime and important in which the faculties of the mind can be engaged. In the wide world of nature, as in the more immediate temple of religion, we catch the shades of this Almighty Being, pervading, influencing, regulating, governing all. Not an improvement of art or science, no commendable action of a human being, whether natural, moral, or spiritual, but what must be referred to him, as the grand efficient cause. It was the contemplation of this unceasing agency in the divine intelligence which caused David, under the impulse of Inspiration, to break forth into that hymn of admiration and prayer, which runs through the cxxxixth Psalm: "How fearfully and wonderfully are we made! such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence!"* To

* It was not with more sound divinity than true philosophy, observed by the apostle Paul in his eloquent address to the Athenians, when speaking of God, that "in him we live and move, and have our being," (Acts xvii. 28,) which could only be applicable to the spiritual nature of the Almighty. It is the Spirit of the Lord which sustains the vital principle of our spiritual existence, by which he first breathed into the dust

consider the Holy Ghost, in this perpetual intimacy and connection with our nature, (if I may presume to call it

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of the ground immortal life, and whereby "man became (at it is said,) a living soul." And what became expedient to impart mere existence to this lifeless mass, necessarily becomes expedient both to its preservation and continuance, and to give vigour and energy to all its operations. Hence it follows, that to the agency of this blessed Spirit, as to the first predisposing cause, are to be ascribed all the actions and improvements which spring out of the human mind, in the various instances and modifications of its exertions. Knowledge and wisdom, skill and contrivance, courage and fortitude, the several degrees of intellectual accomplishments, the different forms of natural acquirements; all in a peculiar manner must be referred to his supreme agency. The world, it is plain, is not much accustomed to consider the subject of the divine superintendence and government of the blessed Spirit on the human mind, in this extensive manner; for even among serious persons who are always disposed to ascribe the change of heart in believers to his regenerating influence, convinced that this mighty work can originate from no less cause than his agency, there are not a few who have yet overlooked the more general operations of the blessed Spirit in the common events of life, and it has escaped their observation. But the certainty of it may be proved from every part of Scripture. We are taught that it is "the Spirit of God which giveth wisdom and understanding; and that in every wise-hearted man the Lord hath put wisdom for work." Thus to the artificer for the sanctuary, the ability of devising curious workmanship is expressly ascribed to the Spirit of God, (Exod. xxxi. 3, 4; xxxvi. 1, 2.) In like manner it is said of the warrior, that confidence is imparted to him from the same divine power, upon especial occasions, in the day of battle. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, when God raised him up for a deliverer to Israel," (Judges iii. 10.) And of Samson also it is said, that "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," (Judges xiv. 6.) To the same cause are ascribed the different effects which appear in the various departments of life; the understanding given to the heathen, and the ability imparted to the husbandman, are said to be his. It is "he which nurtureth the heathen, and teacheth man knowledge," (Psalm xciv. 10.) "He giveth skill to the husbandman, his God doth instruct him to discretion," (Isa. xxviii. 26.) And Zerubbabel was furnished for the great work to which he was appointed, on purpose to shew that it was accomplished "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts!" (Zech. iv. 6.) Hence it appears, that the several effects of conduct in the mind, as well in the ordinary manifestations of nature, as in the more special operations of divine grace on the soul, are the result of his immediate agency. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.) What a pleasing, awful subject, does this view of the perpetual influence of the Holy Spirit on the mind of man afford! and what a fund of the most delightful improvements might a serious and contemplative Christian continually draw

by such terms) exercising a secret and unremitting influence over all the faculties of mind and body, and like

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from it! It does not come within the direct object of this work, to notice it further than in this general way; but I cannot quit it without observing how much our inattention, even to the *common* operations of this Divine Being, deprives us of one of the highest gratifications the soul of man is capable of feeling in the present life. To be for ever under the influence, direction, and energy of this wonder-working God, who is "about our path, and about our bed, and spying out all our ways, and to whom there is not a word in our tongue but he knoweth it altogether:" at the same time that this first great cause is unnoticed, undiscerned, perhaps too often unthought of—what a reproach to our intellectual nature!

If men of science and abilities, persons who are conscious that they excel in any particular walk of life, would but pause and reflect a moment, from what source it is that they derive their superiority over the rest of mankind, they would be led, perhaps, to trace a divine hand in the ordination. And if satisfied that it could come from no other cause, while discerning the gifts of the blessed Spirit, in any qualities of the body, or any of the intellectual endowments of the mind, they were led to make a serious inquiry whether they possessed also the more invaluable blessings of his grace upon the soul; and if not humbly to explore the causes of prevention; what a charming improvement of the contemplation would this be! The same authority from whence we derive information, to whose bounty all *natural* acquirements are to be ascribed, is express upon this subject to teach us, that there are *spiritual* gifts far more excellent, which flow from the same spontaneous goodness. And if men possess the *one*, while they are strangers to the *other;* if those, who from his bounty are better qualified to receive with increased thankfulness, and to improve with increased diligence, those unspeakable gifts, are unconscious of their operation; to what cause can it be ascribed? Surely it is but a *natural* conclusion, that if he hath been so bountiful in imparting the *lesser* communications of his favour, there can be no reason existing in himself why the *greater* should be restrained. It cannot be from any want of disposition in the great *Giver*, but must altogether result from some deficiency in the *receiver*. And what can this deficiency be but an indifference, an insensibility, a disregard to his divine operations? For if men appreciate, as their own attainments, what evidently ought to be ascribed to his free gift, and disdainfully refuse to present the tribute of acknowledgment for the *natural* talents he has bestowed upon them; or to offer the prayer of supplication for the *spiritual* mercies they stand in need of: is it at all wonderful that these mercies should be withheld, and that this grace of "the Holy Spirit should be given" only "to them that ask it?" How unaccountable is it, under any other idea but this, that while men of the humblest abilities are blessed with the noblest manifestations of divine love, "the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit that they are the children of God;" we behold some possessed of the brightest and most acute capacities,

the hidden spring in a machine, acting perhaps most, where least perceived; imparting life and energy to all

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who disbelieve the agency of the blessed Spirit; and though indebted for all they have to his bounty, are unconscious as to any personal apprehension in themselves, "whether there be any Holy Ghost." Why is it that men, who are of a studious turn, and employ their time in the closest application to human learning, err in the exercise of their reason on this subject; but because they bring not to it dispositions previously prepared by humility and prayer to receive information from above? They bend their thoughts with intense diligence to the subject of their speculation; but not the knee of devout request, before the God of grace, to render that diligence effectual. And does not Scripture account for the cause of their failure, and trace it to the source, when saying, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble?" (James iv. 6.)

I shall think myself peculiarly happy, if any thing I have said in this note may induce a *single reader* of this description to make inquiry into the probability of its truth. It certainly well deserves the attention of every thinking person. For if men really derive all their abilities, by which they excel in any of the arts of life, from the *common* operations of the blessed Spirit; and if the grant of his *superior* gifts on the soul is made in some measure to depend upon the humble application for them, it should seem to follow, that they of all others must be the most inexcusable, who though enjoying all their attainments from his unmerited liberality, do yet, by refusing to acknowledge the source from whence they come, disqualify themselves from becoming the proper objects of his greater favours. Are not the words of the prophet directly applicable to all such characters? How does "the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him!" (Isaiah xxx. 18.)

But whatever effect this note may produce on the minds of those, who have yet to learn the universal operations of the blessed Spirit, I venture to hope that *true believers* will be awakened by it to a more animated attention to this first great cause, and his unceasing energy in the world, than is, I fear, usually given to it. Conscious as they are of his gracious superintendence to their *spiritual* interests, and requiring no arguments to convince them of what they daily experience, that all their *eternal* concerns are included in his high administration of grace and mercy; yet in the *ordinary* transactions of life, they are apt to overlook and forget his unremitting regard to their welfare. Else would they never be cast down, as experience shews they too often are, with any of the trials and afflictions of life, if they kept constantly in their view, that this blessed Spirit is always with them, and that he is nearer to support, than any of the most formidable evils are to destroy. The proofs which have been brought from Scripture in this note, may be sufficient to instruct them, that in the most minute concerns, as well as the highest and best; in the improvements of the arts and the common business of the world, no less than in the spiritual operations on the

our powers, and carrying on this process through every period of existence, from our first entrance into being, when forming "man of the dust of the ground, and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life," to the last moment of our departure, when "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it;" and is to be at the final consummation of all things, the great cause of re-animating the dust again to a new and incorruptible life. What subject can the human mind conceive equally sublime, magnificent, and interesting? And though the present limited powers of man prevent his penetrating very far beneath the surface of these "deep things of God:" though it cannot be supposed that we are permitted to lift up that veil, by which these operations of the Spirit are concealed from mortal sight; yet, to have the least glimpse in matters so important, and to which no human being can be indifferent, is enough to excite our most earnest application. And to this diligence of inquiry, God has been pleased to hold forth in his sacred word every possible inducement, to call up the exercise of our intellectual powers, and to reward our closest attention. Every necessary information, suited to the present twilight of existence, is afforded sufficient to answer all the purposes of knowledge, without overpowering the faculties of the mind, with discoveries they are unable to sustain. And under the guidance of revelation, and the aids of divine grace, we are led on in the pleasing, though distant con-

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soul of man, the same pervading principle is uniformly efficacious. And if the life of a *sparrow* be not too inconsiderable to attract the attention of heaven; why should those humble souls, to whom is given the earnest of the Spirit, suppose that *they* can be less the objects of his perpetual regard? What a source of holy comfort does this view of the agency of the blessed Spirit open to us on the suffering of every trial incident to our nature! May every true believer endeavour, if possible, never to lose sight of it, but follow the direction of the Psalmist, as a precept in which he is peculiarly interested; "Oh! put your trust in him alway, ye people, pour out your hearts before him, for he is your God!" (Psalm lxii. 8.)

templation of the great objects of faith here; consoling ourselves at the same time with the assurance of a nearer approach hereafter, when that period, which is hastening fast upon us, is arrived, when we shall no longer "walk by faith, but by sight;" when that "which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away;" when the more clear apprehension of God will then form the highest source of our happiness: we shall "see him as he is," and shall "know, even as we are known."

It will not be expected, neither indeed is it necessary, to my purpose, that I should enter upon the subject so extensively, as to produce every instance, in which the ministry of the blessed Spirit has been displayed in Scripture. For this would be little short of giving an epitome of the whole Bible. The Holy Ghost is undoubtedly the first and last great witness in the church of Christ, and his evidence therefore runs, like a golden thread, through both the sacred volumes. It will answer every intention of this discourse, to bring such proofs of the existence and agency of the blessed Spirit, as shall be deemed sufficient to substantiate the fact itself. Our review of his operations, in the present sermon, will comprise the period from the time of man's innocency to the season of our Lord's incarnation.

If we begin our subject from the epoch of creation, we shall discern immediate traces of his ministry. It is impossible to ascertain the time which Adam continued in a state of innocence. Holy Scripture has not given any certain information upon this point, and therefore all opinion must be conjectural. Neither is it clearly known, whether God condescended to afford the manifestation of himself under any sensible form during this period; or whether the promulgation of his will was delivered without any symbol or figure. But one thing is very remarkable in the different phrases made use of, in allusion to the Almighty, during Adam's continuance

in a state of rectitude, and after the fall. In the former it is said that "the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it: and the Lord God commanded the man," (Gen. ii. 15, 16.) All which seem to imply that God favoured his happy creature with certain clear manifestations of himself, and conversed with him under some visible form, during the continuance of his innocence. But no sooner had Adam transgressed the commands of his Maker, than those expressions were changed. It was then said "that he heard the voice of the Lord God; and that he sought to hide himself from his presence:" which plainly infer, that God had withdrawn his visible appearance, in token of his displeasure; and from that time conversed with him without any other sensible manifestation than that of a voice only. And this derives also a fuller degree of probability from Adam's knowledge of the voice. Had he never received any revelation of his Maker from the ministry of his voice; it is not so likely that he should have known God by his voice. But it is implied, that Adam knew that it was the voice of the Lord God, which he heard, "walking in the garden in the cool of the day."

That this voice was the Holy Ghost, is what I am interested to prove, and which, I think, is abundantly evident from the information given us by the Scripture. It is called "the voice of the Lord God." And the voice, which the prophet Isaiah in after ages heard, is called by the same name. "I heard (says he) the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? And he said, Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed." Now that no possible misapprehension may arise, whose this voice was,

or to whom the prophet referred, when he thus expressed himself; the apostle Paul (under the impulse of that inspirator by whom he spake and wrote,) hath happily explained the passage, and in so many words declared it to be the Holy Ghost. "Well spake the Holy Ghost (says he) by Esaias the prophet, saying, Go unto this people," &c. If you will compare the sixth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, with the twenty-eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will find that St. Paul hath quoted the very words of the prophecy, and in the most unreserved manner made this application. It is also very remarkable, (and in your examination of those Scriptures, I beg it may not be overlooked) that the apostle does not say, "Well spake the voice of the Lord," but "Well spake the Holy Ghost:" thereby not only determining the application of the words to the blessed Spirit, but giving at the same time an indirect testimony to his personality.

From this short but convincing evidence, derived from a comparative view of the third chapter of Genesis with another Scripture, respecting the identity between the voice which Adam heard in the garden of Eden and the Holy Ghost, we may derive ability to discern, upon other occasions, the same ministry exercised by the blessed Spirit, under subsequent revelations in the church of God. It was by a *voice* that Moses was addressed from the flaming bush, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in Mount Horeb; for it is said that "God called to him out of the midst of the bush," (Exod. iii. 4.) The same was heard again on Mount Sinai, at the delivery of the law, when Moses spake, and "God answered by a voice," (Exod. xix. 19.) And as an undeniable proof, that this voice was the invisible Jehovah, Moses admonished the Israelites against the commission of idolatry, from this very circumstance: "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words but saw no similitude, only ye heard a

voice," (Deut. iv. 12.) And was it not the same voice, which came to the prophet Elijah on Mount Horeb, when "the Lord passed by and rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord?"* Was it not the same, which was heard "like a man's voice" by the prophet Daniel, "between the banks of Ulai," giving commandment to Gabriel, to explain to him the vision? (Dan. viii. 16.) It is true, indeed, in these and other examples of a similar kind, which we meet with in the sacred word, it is not expressly said, that it was the Holy Ghost whose voice was heard; yet, when the greatness of the being, which is clearly implied under it, is considered; when the parallel passages are carefully reviewed together; and more especially the very striking instance already noticed, so fully explained by the apostle, and directly declared by him to be the Holy Ghost: it should seem that there can be but little danger of error, in supposing that the ministry of the blessed Spirit hath been exercised upon various occasions, in the same way, and that it was his voice which was heard by others, as well as by the prophet Isaiah.

It would be highly gratifying, no doubt, to every serious mind, to explore the whole of the Old Testament, for all the instances which occur, of the agency of the Holy Ghost, under the manifestation of a voice. But this would impede the prosecution of our subject, in other particulars equally interesting. The few I have produced are competent to the purpose intended. We have seen, that the first intimation of the ministry of the blessed Spirit, was by a voice, which was heard in the garden of Eden after the fall. And from that period, to the visible descent of the Holy Ghost in the days of our Lord's ministration, the purposes of the divine will have been occasionally carried on by the same means. Even

* 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. As an additional proof, that this voice was the Jehovah, it is remarkable that the phrase is altered in the fifteenth verse, and it is there said, "Jehovah spake," &c.

now indeed in the present hour, when the outward operation hath ceased, and this voice is no longer audible to the ear of sense; the inward efficacy of it is the more sensibly perceived by all true believers. It is the "still small voice;" the word "which their ears hear behind them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."*

* Isaiah xxx. 21. It must be very obvious, to every reader conversant in the sacred writings, that among the numerous passages which describe this ministry of a voice, *some* of them are expressly spoken, in reference to the Father, and *others*, without any violation of the meaning of the text, may be applied to either of the persons in the Godhead. But what does this prove, but the very point contended for; namely, that in the essence of GODHEAD there is a plurality of persons? The intercommunity of *ministrations* among them; and what is said in *one place*, in direct application to the Father, being *in another*, as plainly spoken of in allusion to the Holy Ghost; these circumstances are the most decisive testimonies in proof of the doctrine. It would be an anticipation of my subject in this place, to enter upon the evidences, either of the personality, or GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost: but to prevent any obscurity in the above argument, and to throw as much clearness upon as we go on, as a matter so very mysterious will admit, it may be proper to observe, that it is from hence we draw our conclusions of the existence of a divine plurality, in the indivisible essence of GODHEAD. The passage before noticed in the prophecy of Isaiah, is so clear and express to this purpose, that there can be needed no other reference in support of the doctrine. The man of God, in one of the most sublime and magnificent representations possible, describes Jehovah as seen by him, sitting upon a throne of glory, and the sanctities of heaven standing before him; and while the Seraphims veiled their faces, in token perhaps of their deep humility, "one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," (Isaiah vi. 3.) The trisagium of the angelic host can only be properly understood upon those principles, on which is founded the belief of this plurality of persons in the essence of the GODHEAD. For that the Father was included in this act of adoration, will hardly be questioned: that it was no less the glory of Christ which the prophet saw, we have an inspired apostle's express authority, (John xii. 41.) And that the Holy Ghost was comprehended in the divine honour the Seraphims offered, is very evident from his speaking to the prophet. And if any further proof be necessary, the form of words, in which he addressed Isaiah, must be considered as explanatory in the clearest manner. "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Here at once a solution of every difficulty. "Whom shall I send;" can only be understood as expressing an identity of *person*: "and who will go for us;" becomes as full an implication of a *plurality* of persons.

The expulsion of our first parents from paradise (when by sin they had drawn upon themselves the displeasure of their Maker, and had forfeited those more immediate and delightful interviews, with which he was pleased to gratify them in that happy garden,) occasioned a total alteration of circumstances; and a thorough change in the manner of communication with their Maker necessarily took place. And although their dismission from that blissful region was accompanied with a gracious promise, that in time to come, some means of restoration to the divine favour should be vouchsafed them; yet this was delivered in such vague and indefinite terms, as, unless explained by succeeding revelations, would have left the mind for ever in a state of ignorance, respecting the nature and design of this important doctrine. But with what veneration and astonishment ought we to look into those sacred records, when we discover, that from the very obscurity in which the first prediction of the scheme of redemption was hidden, arose the ministry of the blessed Spirit, in the intermediate ages, preparatory to its completion. To this one purport the several dispensations of his grace have been directed, whether under *prophecy*, *visions*, or *miracles*. In every one of them the Holy Ghost has gradually unfolded to the apprehension of the human

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There can be no certain meaning affixed to any terms, if these are not to be understood in the sense explained. Language can find no other mode of conveying ideas. And those who are not satisfied with testimonies of this nature (which, considering the incompetency of man to explore the deep things of God, are really more than might have been reasonably hoped for on so sublime a subject,) would do well to consider what evidences, suited to a life of faith, would fully come up to their wishes. There are no limits to growing expectations. And it is very possible, that had the Divine Being condescended, for the correction of sceptical minds, in any given period of his church, to have manifested himself as the immediate object of sight (supposing such a display of his glory compatible with our faculties of vision,) yet the belief of it would have lost its effect, and the impressions of it have been effaced, unless occasionally renewed: and the very condescension in a single instance would only have been made the argument for repeating it from age to age.

mind, the knowledge of that great blessing wrapped up in the mysterious terms of the promise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." And by opening more and more in the successive revelations, the grand purposes contained therein, mankind were to be awakened to the pleasing expectation of the great Redeemer of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ; who, as the "seed of the woman," was to come in the fulness of time, to recover man from the disorders of his fallen nature, to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore order among all the works of God.

In allusion to this important event, the Spirit of prophecy commenced his operations in the earliest periods of time. This formed another great branch in the division of effects, by which the Holy Ghost, as the grand cause, was pleased to carry on his ministry in the world. Beginning in dark and obscure terms, and regularly advancing with a brighter and more distinct testimony at every step, as the great object to which it pointed drew nearer, it pervaded every part of revelation, and either by immediate description, or by distant allusion, so minutely sketched both the person and character of the promised Messiah, that the mind was left in no suspense, nor could entertain the least doubt to whom the whole referred."

This spirit of prophecy "which is the testimony of Jesus," (Rev. xix. 10,) is unquestionably the most considerable and momentous, in all the ministrations of the Holy Ghost, previous to the incarnation of Christ. But the contemplation of it in that comprehensive chain of evidence to our Lord's character, which is connected with it through every part of the Old Testament, is beside my present purpose. To establish the fact itself, that the prophets in all their testimonies and predictions, acted under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, is all that I am at present concerned to shew. And this indeed is so plain and palpable, that no one, I believe,

will venture to deny it. "Prophecy (says the apostle Peter) came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. i. 21.) And the evangelist Luke intimates, that prophets were only the medium by which sacred truths were imparted to mankind. It was God who "spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began," (Luke i. 70.) Hence, one and the same energy of the divine Spirit operated to impel Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to prophesy, (Jude 14,) and Zacharias, who being "filled with the Holy Ghost," prophesied a short period before the advent of Christ in the flesh, (Luke i. 67.) And all the intermediate instances, wherein the prophetic spirit was exercised in the numerous examples recorded in the sacred word, are so clearly to be ascribed to his agency, that I conceive, after the testimonies mentioned, it would be altogether superfluous to offer any additional arguments in their support.

If we pass on to the examination of that period of the world, immediately preceding the flood, in quest of evidences of the Holy Ghost's ministry; we find that in this space of time, there are but few traces of his appearance to be found. The Lord had indeed declared, that his "Spirit should not always strive with man," (Gen. vi. 3;) and there seems to have been an evident remission of his operation, in the intermediate ages from the fall, to the building of the ark. The instance of Noah only being excepted, there is a dead silence respecting the agency of the Holy Spirit. "Noah (it is said) found grace in the eyes of the Lord," (Gen. vi. 8,) and "was a preacher of righteousness," (Pet. ii. 5:) which effects, there can be no question, were the sole result of the Spirit's influences. But we have no guide to lead us to any further information, concerning his operations at this time. Indeed, his ministry, during this interval, and from the flood to the call of Abraham, appears to have

been exercised sparingly, as far as we are able to conclude; for the Scriptures have not been particular in the relation. From the eventful incidents in the history of Noah, and from the character given of him in the sacred word, that "he was a just man and perfect in his generations," (Gen. vi. 9,) it is probable that God granted to this father of the new world the privilege of a nearer approach, such as had been shewn the parent of the old. But it was not till the call of Abraham, and the institution of that covenant, which God was pleased to make in his person with mankind, that we again discern those more express and striking features of the ministry of the Holy Ghost. In this age of the world, as the grand scheme of divine mercy in redemption began to unfold itself somewhat more openly, the great truths veiled under prophetic language became proportionably more developed. The obscurity of expression contained in the prediction respecting the *woman's seed*, was now so far explained, as to be understood in reference to some great personage, whose auspicious advent should be productive to mankind of the highest consequences. And the identity of his character was in some measure ascertained by the limitation of his descent to the race of Abraham, "in whose seed" it was declared that "all the families of the earth should be blessed," (Gen. xxii. 18.)

The selection of this patriarch from the mass of mankind, as the person with whom the deposit of the promise should be made, became so express a mark of divine approbation, that it is reasonable to infer, whatever prompted God to distinguish him in this manner, that he would be equally signalized by some more than ordinary manifestations of grace. And here again we discover visible proofs of God's favour carried on through the ministration of the agency of the blessed Spirit. Superadded to many remarkable events of this kind shewn to Abraham and his immediate descendants, "the heirs together with him of the same promises," (Heb. ix. 9,)

by a new species of revelation, of which no traces are before discoverable in the world, we behold the great father of the faithful peculiarly favoured, when it is said, "the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision," (Gen. xv. 1.)

This is the first example on sacred record, where the revelation God was pleased to make, is expressly ascribed to the effect of a vision. From this period to the coming of Christ, and in a few cases after, in the infant days of Christianity, it became a very common channel of the communication of the divine will to man.*

I shall not attempt to define the nature of a vision, or endeavour to explain in what it consisted. This is perfectly inexpedient. That it was made the medium by God, for accomplishing his divine purposes, is evident from Scripture; and in addition to this testimony, all it concerns me to shew is, that it was wrought by the operation of the blessed Spirit. In proof, I think it only necessary to produce the words of the prophet Joel, explained by the apostle Peter; in which not only the effect of *dreams* and *visions*, but *prophecy* also, is referred unto his immediate agency. "It shall come to pass in the last days (saith God,) that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions,

* The history of the patriarchs is full of the visions and dreams in which the blessed Spirit exercised his influence on the minds of men. And in the subsequent ages the effect was not lessened. It is remarkable that the prophet Isaiah calls his whole prophecy, "the vision which he saw," (Isaiah i. 1.) Under the New Testament we find the apostle Paul speaking of a vision of the night, (Acts xvi. 9.) And Peter in the case of Cornelius was instructed, by means of a vision, how to conduct himself in that affair, (Acts x. 9.) Indeed, that the knowledge and apprehension of visions were not worn off the mind in those days, is evident from the case of Zacharias in the temple, and that of Peter's deliverance from prison. In the former, the effect produced on Zacharias was considered by the people as the consequence of his having seen a vision; and in the latter, Peter had no idea that it was any thing more than a visionary representation of his rescue from the dungeon, till convinced that he was really set at liberty,

and your old men shall dream dreams."* From whence it plainly appears, that the whole of these events, in every period of the church, owed their existence to the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and resulted altogether from his operation.

I pass over the notice of the numerous incidents in the life of Abraham and his immediate descendants, in which the divine favour was manifested as well through the instrumentality of dreams and visions, as by personal interviews, or the ministration of angels. For though some of them would unquestionably serve to illustrate more fully my argument in proof of the agency of the blessed Spirit, yet the detail would necessarily induce a prolixity of matter not admissible in a work of this nature. I can only beg to refer you to the history itself. The slightest acquaintance with the book of Genesis is sufficient to demonstrate, that the instances are not a few wherein his operations appear.

When the patriarchs were gone off the stage, and Moses was risen up to be the minister of the Lord's people, the traces of the blessed Spirit's work in the world are no less discernible. Whoever considers indeed the singular honour conferred upon Moses in God's talking to him "face to face, as a man talketh to his friend," and before whom the "Lord made all his glory to pass," (Exod. xxxiii. 11, 22,) will be led to conclude, that the efficient work of the Spirit during his ministration, would not be diminished. The arduous charge committed to his government, seemed to demand some more extraordinary assistance and manifestations of the divine favour than usual; and accordingly we find, during the whole of his eventful history, perpetual evidences of the Spirit's agency, in all the various circumstances, where his operation became needful. Added to those instances of *prophecy* and *vision* before mentioned, which were still continually occurring as oc-

* Compare Joel ii. 28, with Acts ii. 16.

casion required, the works of the Holy Ghost were yet more fully illustrated by the accumulation of another testimony of his power; and the exhibition of miracles, which commenced under the ministry of Moses, more eminently signalized the presence of the blessed Spirit.

To go into the consideration of miracles in the detail, or even to exemplify the actual influence of the Holy Ghost in their operation, by the induction of particular instances, would carry me too far. A single testimony from the divine word, that *miracles* are among the works to be peculiarly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, will answer all my purpose, and become the most convincing evidence to the reality of his agency. In proof therefore, I shall beg to produce the sentiments of the apostle Paul on this subject, who, among other confirmations of the faith, expressly enumerates those of miracles, as resulting from his immediate efficiency. "God also (says he) bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, (Heb. ii. 4:) and lest the shadow of a doubt should remain, that miracles were among the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the same apostle elsewhere speaking of spiritual gifts, after instancing their diversity and operation, whether manifested in *wisdom*, or *knowledge*, or *faith*, or the *gifts of healing*, or *miracles*, sums up the account with express application to the Holy Ghost as the great author and giver of all: "All these (says he) worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 6—12.)

I think this simple state of the case appears to be so fully satisfactory and convincing, that in my apprehension any further reference becomes superfluous and unnecessary. I shall only therefore observe, under this part of the subject, in speaking of miracles, that the history of the Israelites, during the ministration of the several prophets, affords such a continuity of evidence to the point in question, that whoever reads the miraculous events in that little commonwealth with an attentive eye, will per-

ceive such leading traits to distinguish the agency of the blessed Spirit, presiding over and regulating all its affairs, as can leave no manner of doubt on the mind, that these are among the effects of his especial ministry."*

If I have been tedious while exploring the early Scriptures for testimonies to the important doctrine under consideration; your attention will be the sooner relieved in prosecuting our inquiry through the remaining part of the Old Testament, yet unnoticed. For having now traced the divine agency of the blessed Spirit under those leading principles of *prophecy*, *vision*, and *miracles*, which more eminently distinguish his ministry (and I hope produced sufficient evidences under every one of them for procuring your unreserved belief,) it will be the less necessary for me to insist much upon the similar instances which occur in the subsequent pages of the divine word. It will only remain for me, therefore, to shew, that the same exertions were uniformly carried on, as occasion required, excepting the interval of the cessation of prophecy, from the beginning of the commonwealth of Israel, to the advent of Christ; to which great event, as to a centre, all the preceding ministrations were directed, and in which they had their completion. I shall be brief, however, in glancing over the several ages of the church, only just observing, that during the time of the theocracy, and under the successive epochs of the kings of Israel; both when the kingdom was elective, and when settled in one hereditary succession; and again, after its division into separate and distinct monarchies, to the time of the destruction of the temple and the captivity of the people; as well as when they were returned from Babylon, and had rebuilt the Lord's house: through all these periods and under every revolution, the same almighty traces are

* From the expression of our blessed Lord in ascribing his casting out devils to the Spirit of God, (Matt. xii. 28,) it should seem to imply, that the operation of the Holy Ghost was exerted also in these instances on the person of Jesus; but this could only be in reference to his humanity. It serves, however, to strengthen our former argument.

visible, of the influences of the blessed Spirit, carrying on by such various means, as suited the gracious purposes of his will, the great objects of his ministry. That of *prophecy* in particular (which has been already shewn to have resulted from his direct operation) shone with a brilliancy surpassing that of all preceding ages. It was within those periods the prophecies were delivered concerning the future events of the Messiah's kingdom, which through the overruling providence of God, have been preserved from all the ravages of time, and handed down to us in the present hour pure and uncorrupted; bearing upon their sacred characters, as they evidently do, every discriminating mark of divine inspiration. For it could neither be the effect of human foresight or human conjecture; neither could any fortuitous circumstances have produced the things which they foretold, so as to form a correspondence, which appears in even the minutest point, between the event and the prediction. And who is there, if he beholds the person and work of the blessed Redeemer of the world, so accurately delineated as they are in those writings, under one part or other of his character, that can resist the conviction of their own consciences, and have a doubt but it must have been the Spirit of the Lord alone, which conveyed these truths into the mind, and guided the pen of the prophet?

And when the season of these predictions ceased with the last of the prophets, Malachi; though there succeeded a dead silence of the prophetic spirit in the church, during an interval of more than three hundred years; and, when together with this departure, notwithstanding the *temple* was rebuilt, the *Urim* and the *Thummim* were no more, the *ark* of the covenant was lost, the *fire* upon the altar extinguished, and the manifestation of the *divine presence* gone: yet all these events under the ordination of the same great Head of his people, were only ministering more effectually to that promised season when, according to Isaiah, "though darkness had co-

vered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord should arise upon them, and his glory be seen among them," (Isaiah lx. 2.)

The Holy Ghost during all this period, was neither an inattentive nor an inactive spectator, of the great object of his ministry. He had suspended, indeed, his operations on the minds of the prophets, but this was with a view, perhaps, to rouse the whole nation of Israel to the more awakened expectation of the important event, long and sufficiently foretold, and now solemnly drawing near. The evening of prophecy, therefore, only indicated the approach of the evangelical morning. Its sun was indeed set, but the radiations of its shining remained. And as the great luminary of the day, when going down the heavens, gives tints of brightness to the sky, long after its orb of glory is sunk beneath the horizon; so the day of prophecy, when finished, left behind it sufficient rays of its lustre to preserve twilight upon the earth, until the night which succeeded it was past, and that morning dawned upon the world, which should have no end: when the Sun of Righteousness himself was to arise, no more to go down, but be unto his people an everlasting light, and their God their glory, (Isaiah lx. 19, 20.) In this memorable era, and almost in the very hour of the advent of Jesus, as a confirmation, perhaps, that "to him give all the prophets witness," (Acts x. 43,) the blessed Spirit reassumed his work of prophecy, and by his grace inspired a few chosen characters to be the immediate heralds of our Lord. Hence "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied," (Luke i. 67;) hence the Virgin Mary was impressed with the same divine influence, and burst forth in that sublime hymn of praise recorded by the evangelist, (Luke i. 46.) Good old Simeon, Elizabeth, and Anna the prophetess, are all reported to have received the impulse of inspiration, (Luke i. 41; ii. 25—38;) and John the Baptist, the harbinger of Jesus, of whose mi-

nistry the Gospel is so particular in the relation, is expressly said "to have been filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb," (Luke i. 15.)

Thus have I humbly endeavoured to lead you through the Scriptures of the Old Testament, with a view to discover some traces of the ministry of the blessed Spirit, in the government of his church. What hath been proposed to your consideration, can be viewed only as mere sketches of a subject, which if taken in its comprehension and in a manner suitable to its grandeur and sublimity, could be only adequately represented by the pen of inspiration itself. We may in this instance perhaps, above every other, adopt the language of Job, and demand, "who by searching can find out God, who can find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job xi. 7.) The result of our inquiry however will afford, I trust, a very satisfactory answer to the question in the text, which is the basis of the present discourse, "whether there be any Holy Ghost?" by determining in the affirmative, both from the certainty of his being and of his operations; for nothing can be clearer, than that his ministry hath been exercised in the church of God from the very beginning of things, and uniformly carried on through all its periods, and that he is the first and last great witness to "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The conviction of this undoubted fact necessarily leads to others of equal, and I had almost said, in relation to us, of increasing importance. For if it be certain that this Almighty Spirit hath exercised with unremitting attention a superintendence over all the affairs of the Lord's people, in every period of the church; and while directing only the "types and shadows of good things to come," bending such a world of regard to the minutiæ of his ministry; surely it must be incredible to suppose, that his presence should be withdrawn and his government cease, when the great object, to which the whole ministered, was arrived! If the *shadows* were considered

to be sufficiently interesting to engage his care, what must the *substance* itself be? And if such divine effects followed the ministry of this gracious Spirit, when he so condescendingly shed his influence on the mind of a few characters, selected (as we have seen) from the mass of mankind; what may we not suppose must follow this copiousness of blessing, all along promised, when his divine energy was to be "poured forth upon all flesh!"

To this great subject, we are next to direct our inquiries. But for the better apprehension of it, it will be previously necessary to have some further insight (as far as the word of God will guide us) into his person and character; of whom such mighty things are revealed, as have been seen in the testimonies already brought before you. It is time however to remit your attention. For the present therefore I add no more, but a fervent prayer to Almighty God, that the solemn and interesting subject, we have been now considering, may leave a lasting impression upon every heart: that in all the public intercourse of society, as well as in private seasons of retirement; both by day and by night, at our lying down, and at our rising up: we may possess such a complete sense of his divine presence, and such an abiding dependance on his divine aid, that by accustoming ourselves to "set the Lord always before us," we may find that he is "on our right hand, and we shall not be moved," (Psalm xvi. 8.)

SERMON III.

LUKE iii. 22.

The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove.

VARIOUS are the methods by which the truth of any given proposition may be proved, to the satisfaction of the human mind. There are innumerable circumstances, which, by their very nature, cannot be reduced to a mathematical demonstration, and yet bring with them such undeniable testimonies, as are nothing short of a moral certainty. And it is this moral certainty, which, for the most part, becomes the great arbiter of decision, in the common occurrences of life. We cannot possibly obtain any more satisfactory determination than this, respecting subjects connected with remote ages of antiquity. Our belief of the best authenticated truths of history, is altogether founded upon the nature and degree of the credibility with which the facts are attested, and does not depend upon any knowledge we possess of the facts themselves. And yet no one hesitates to receive with implicit faith, whatever is built upon such a foundation of evidences, as rises into a moral probability. Let this reasoning be abstracted from common events, and applied to religion, and especially to the mysterious parts of it; which not depending upon personal knowledge, but collateral evidence, should be governed by the same rule. In all cases indeed, where palpable and ocular demonstration is not attainable, we may very fairly admit such testimony, as contains the fullest assurances of a moral certainty. It will readily be granted, that the greater obscurity in which any truth is involved, the greater necessity arises therefrom, for a more close application

of the intellectual faculties to its investigation; and it is not barely an allowable, but a very commendable suspension of the judgment, and proper to be exercised upon all occasions, where the evidences of the truth are not convincing and satisfactory. Particularly on so momentous a concern as that of religion, we cannot be too careful in examining the grounds of belief, nor too scrupulous in admitting only what comes recommended with proper authority. But at the same time, it must argue inveterate prejudice, or somewhat worse, to resist such testimonies, (and especially where the nature of the subject precludes higher proofs,) as cannot but be fairly allowed by all impartial persons, to be sufficient to the conviction of every candid and reasonable mind.

I have been led into this train of observation, (which is not inapplicable, and will not, I hope, be thought impertinent, as prefatory to the intended subject of the present discourse,) in considering the nature of the evidence, with which we are furnished, of the *personality* of the Holy Ghost. The testimonies to this great truth, it must be acknowledged, are of that kind, which admit not of mathematical demonstration; but they afford all the proofs which can be required of a moral certainty. It has been observed, that Scripture does not in so many words directly say, that the Holy Ghost is a person; but we find a great variety of passages in the holy book, and those passages supported by as many other collateral testimonies, tantamount to the same, which as fully prove his personality, as that of either of the sacred persons in the Godhead. If then it can be fairly and fully shewn, and from the unquestionable authority of the inspired word, that the sacred *Three*, which constitute the one indivisible essence of GODHEAD, are each distinguished by peculiar operations, clearly specifying a distinction of person and character; though the mode of existence cannot be fully explained to human apprehension; yet, if it be a doctrine necessarily arising out of Scripture, and capable

of being amply proved by it, it becomes as certain a proposition for the assurance of faith, as any mathematical deduction can be for the conviction of sense. In that wonderful series of operations which are peculiarly ascribed to the Holy Ghost, we trace every mark which can discriminate an all-wise, all-powerful, and Supreme Agent. And if these attributes are proofs of personality, (as they cannot but be acknowledged,) what does it signify, that our faculties are not commensurate to the apprehension, how the distinction of being is preserved in the several persons of the Godhead, consistent with the unity of the divine essence? The fact surely is not lessened by our incompetency of perception. Truth can never depend upon our ability of explaining it. We can only draw certain conclusions from certain premises. And from the selfsame argument, by which we infer the person of a man, from actions which demonstrate his existence and identity; we must infer the being of the blessed Spirit, from actions which can be ascribed only to personality.

Agreeably to the plan which I have prescribed to myself, for the execution of our subject; having, in the preceding Sermon clearly established the certainty of the *Being* of the Holy Ghost, by tracing his footsteps through the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which are discoverable a train of operations, all demonstrative of his pervading presence and power; it becomes necessary, before we prosecute our researches, respecting the continuance of his agency, carried on under the dispensation of the New Testament, that we should inquire into the person and character of a Being, to whom we have seen ascribed such wonderful operations. Whether he be a *person* existing with the Eternal Father, and the Eternal Son, in the one indivisible essence of the Godhead; or only an *emanation*, an *attribute*, or *quality*, of the GODHEAD; is the important question for decision. It will be the object of the present discourse therefore to

substantiate the certainty of his personality, by a selection of the several testimonies of Scripture, which are express to this purpose.

Among the evidences which it may be necessary to bring forward upon the occasion, I consider the text, and the circumstances connected with it, as very highly illustrative of the subject. In which, if I mistake not, is included not only an express identity of character in the Holy Ghost, but at the same time, an evident distinction is implied, of somewhat peculiar and appropriate to each of the sacred persons in the Godhead.*

When John the Baptist, in compliance with the request of Christ, had baptized our Lord in the river Jordan, the evangelist tells us, that "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove,† upon him,

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* Perhaps, in priority of order, the first text of Scripture, which ought to have been noticed in our argument, is the one contained in the annunciation of the angel to the Virgin Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee," (Luke i. 35.) In this verse, unless the "Holy Ghost," and the "power of the Highest," be considered synonymous (which without a degree of violence to the terms made use of cannot be admitted,) here is a plain distinction expressed, sufficient to infer the personality of the Holy Ghost. But it is enough to notice it in this incidental way, without lengthening the subject by introducing it into the body of the discourse.

† It would be a tedious, and after all an unprofitable service, to collect the great variety of opinions among commentators, respecting the particular *form* assumed by the Holy Ghost, in his descent upon the person of Christ. Many have supposed that the words are to be taken literally, as they are expressed, that the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove; and it must be acknowledged that the words of the evangelist seem to indicate as much σωματικω ειδει, the literal English of which is, *in a corporeal form*. Others have concluded from the parallel passage in Matt. iii. 16, and also of Mark i. 10, in both which the phrase is ωσει περιστεραν, that the blessed Spirit descended on Christ *as* a dove, that is, he descended in a similar manner, and as a dove, which hovers over the object before it alights upon it. Hammond, Whitby, and Guyse, are of this opinion, and in justification of it observe, that had the appearance related to the shape or form only, the words should not have been ωσει περιστεραν, *as a dove*, but with a genitive, ωσει περιστερας, as *of* a dove. But these differences of sentiment are all confined to the manner, or form, in which the Holy Ghost was pleased to descend, and have no relation to the certainty of his appearance. There is but one opinion

and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In this passage we perceive three divine persons distinctly specified, as engaged in this solemn transaction; our blessed Lord in the act of being baptized; the Holy Ghost visibly descending in a bodily shape like a dove; and the Father declaring by the ministry of a voice from heaven, Christ to be his beloved Son. Though the relation is but short, yet, it must be confessed, it is very decisive. And as far as is necessary for our purpose, or perhaps, as we are capable of apprehending personal distinction in the GODHEAD, very clear and discriminating characters of each are drawn in it. For if the *voice* which came from heaven (and which it should be particularly noticed, *followed* the descent of the Holy Ghost,) could be no other than the voice of the Father (which will not I believe be doubted;) and if the authority of the inspired writer be admitted, that the Holy Ghost actually

respecting this, in which they all concur with the evangelist; that the Holy Ghost actually descended: a sufficient evidence (when considered in conjunction with the testimonies given at the same time of the operations of the Father and of the Son) of the blessed Spirit's personality. I cannot dismiss this note, without adding to it the remark of Dr. Owen in his observations upon the Spirit's descent, in which he takes notice of the analogy between the operation of the Holy Ghost in the beginning of the *old* creation and the commencement of the *new*. As in the former instance, in the world of nature, the Spirit is said to have moved upon the waters, communicating life and energy to the fluid, for the purposes to which it was intended to minister: so he hovered over *him* in the baptismal waters, by whose operation in the world of grace, all things were to be made new. The form of a dove also, assumed perhaps in allusion to that *dove* which, after the destruction of the old world, brought tidings of life and liberty to Noah, became no unapt similitude to intimate *his* ministry, who came with tidings of eternal life and salvation to mankind, when under the destruction of sin and death. The idea is certainly very just and beautiful, and it is really astonishing how many charming things of the same kind, to illustrate the analogy of Scripture, may be discovered from comparative views of it, by those who explore the book of God with a diligence of application suitable to its infinite importance. The sacred word, in this sense, may be considered (according to one of the inimitable figures of our divine Lord) as *hidden treasure;* its richest ore lies deep, and will not be found but by digging for it; those who sweep the surface only, will leave the most valuable parts behind.

descended upon our Lord in a visible form; the certainty that the blessed Spirit is a person, must undeniably follow, by the plainest of all proofs. And thus we are provided with a positive testimony to this great truth, in the very first page of the gospel. Here are present, and distinctly so, the Holy Three.

To this testimony, we may add another of the same kind from that memorable passage of the apostle John, in the first of his epistles. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."* Among all that has

* I am not to be informed, of the many disputes which have taken place, concerning the authenticity of this verse; and of the charges which have been brought by the opposers of our Lord's GODHEAD against it, that it is an interpolation. It is not indeed a matter of the smallest surprise, that a verse, which on the supposition of its being genuine, carries with it such an invincible proof of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, should be called in question by persons whose tenets are hostile to this grand article of a Christian's faith. Whoever wishes to see the different opinions on this long contested subject, may find them very amply discussed, and with an impartiality suited to the sacred nature of the question, in Dr. Mills's Prolegomena; or Hammond in his Annotations; and Mr. John Reynold's continuation of Henry's Exposition. And among later authors, none more circumstantially than by Archdeacon Travis in his letters to Mr. Gibbon. It is not the smallest predilection I trust, that induces me to say, I have received the most satisfying conviction of its authenticity. And I venture to believe, that whoever sits down, and reads with coolness and without prejudice, the very impartial statement of Dr. Mills upon the subject, will rise up, not only highly pleased with the Doctor's candour, and the ability which he hath shewn in the investigation; but be of the same opinion as he was, that the verse brings with it such decisive marks of a genuine reading, that it ought by all means to be retained in our copies of the New Testament. For my own part, I would beg, with great deference to other writers, to make one observation upon it, which though it may have been made before, yet is in my esteem of so much importance in the argument, that I think it cannot be too much insisted upon in proof of its authenticity. It is an argument also that I prefer to all others, because it is plain and obvious, and is parallel to the apprehension of every reader. Upon the presumption that the verse in question be removed, there is an evident want of connection between the words immediately preceding and following it, and the whole sense of the apostle's reasoning is lost. The verse preceding ends thus: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth." Then follows the disputed text; "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost:

been said upon this remarkable verse of Scripture, it has never been once questioned (on the supposition of its authenticity,) to whom the sacred characters mentioned in it referred. And if any form of words can convey a determinate sense of personal distinction, it must certainly be allowed that this passage does so, and that in the clearest manner. Each of the characters is specifically enumerated; nor is there any thing said which can imply the personality of the Father, and the Son, more than that of the Holy Ghost. And it would be a contradiction in terms to say that there are *three* which bear

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and these three are one." To which is immediately added, "And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in one." As the whole now stands, the connection is unbroken, the sense perfect, and the apostle's reasoning clear and intelligible. But upon the supposition that the disputed passage be thrown out, the antithesis between the *heavenly* witnesses, and the *earthly*, is lost, and something to make out the correspondent sense of the whole, is evidently wanting. And as a further confirmation, what the apostle subjoins in the next verse, is happily explanatory. "If we receive (says he) the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;" whereas upon the presumption that the verse in question is an interpolation, there is no *witness of God* mentioned before, in which the stress of the comparison is made. I cannot help thinking this argument to be so plain and convincing, that it almost supersedes the necessity of every other.

What is highly gratifying to the true believer is the consideration, that this passage in the writings of St. John, if genuine, corresponds to the pure doctrine "of the faith once delivered to the saints;" and if it be *not* genuine, that faith derives its stability from too many, and too well supported testimonies, to need any single evidence in its confirmation. But how necessary it must be to the Antitrinitarian cause, that the authenticity of the verse should not barely be questionable, but clearly proved to be spurious, is plain from this one consideration. Admitting it to be the real writing of the apostle John, and the long contest of ages is at once decided; "There are three that bear witness in heaven." And does the scepticism then of the Arian, the Socinian, and Unitarian, rest upon the bare *possibility* that this verse may not be genuine? It is far from my intention to give offence, but I would very humbly beg to recommend this view of the case, to the serious and candid consideration of those professors of Christianity. How perfectly well satisfied ought they to be, that the passage in question is a forgery, before they subscribe to the contrary persuasion: for if its authenticity be given up, the doctrine it contains remains the same; and if it be true, against it there can be no appeal.

record, if the Holy Ghost be considered only as an attribute or emanation of the GODHEAD; for in this case there could be but *two;* the Father and the Word; the emanation being a nonentity. It is charging therefore the apostle with somewhat worse than folly, to suppose that he should assert that there are *three* heavenly witnesses, when upon this state of things there are but *two.* From this plain representation of the fact, I leave it with any man of common reflection to determine, whether the certainty of the Holy Ghost's being a person could have been more strongly inferred by any other form of words than this under consideration; and whether this may not serve to account also for the reason why we meet with no passage in the Scripture, which in direct terms declares his personality: because the fact itself is so fully ascertained, both from the nature of the thing, and the various and concurrent testimonies to this amount, that so obvious a proposition could require no plainer evidence.

It would be going out of my way, to remark the strength which is derived from this text of Scripture, to the fundamental doctrine of the Catholic faith. This is too glaring, I am persuaded, to escape notice; and it is beside my present purpose to enter upon its discussion. All that I am concerned at this time to prove is, the personality of the Holy Ghost. And the observations which have been made with this view, upon the words of the apostle, will, I hope, in a great measure answer this intent. Perhaps it might tend to corroborate the proof still more, if it could be shewn, that St. John in his relation of the three heavenly witnesses, alluded to some more particular season than ordinary, when this testimony might be given. And if so, there is none to which it can be so applicable, during the days of our Lord's ministration in the flesh, as to the time of his baptism. And this appears to me to be so highly probable, that I confess it was in this idea, I introduced to your consi-

deration this passage of the apostle's, immediately after noticing the preceding paragraph, as forming the best illustration of it. It was in that solemn transaction of our Lord's baptism, above every other recorded in Scripture, in which the united testimony of the sacred Three was delivered together. During many seasons of Christ's ministry, we discover each of the heavenly witnesses, separately and distinctly testifying to the truth of our Lord's mission. At the transfiguration, and in answer to Christ's prayer, the Father, by a voice from heaven, declared his approbation of the person and character of Jesus. Upon several occasions, and especially before Pontius Pilate, the uncreated Word himself, " witnessed a good confession." And the third of the heavenly witnesses, the Holy Ghost, besides his visible descent on Christ at his baptism, and on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, has been, and still continues to be, the great witness of the church of Christ, by his indwelling and perpetual influence, agreeably to our Lord's promise, in the hearts of believers. But though these are all so many very satisfactory and circumstantial proofs, in support of the apostle's doctrine, of the three heavenly witnesses, separately and distinctly considered; yet if it be supposed, that he referred to their joint testimony given, in any one particular period of our Lord's ministry upon earth, it should seem to have been to this of his baptism, than which nothing can be more express and particular. I mention it, however, with the respectful diffidence of one, who presumes not to speak confidently or decidedly upon a subject so sublime and mysterious. That the passage of the apostle may be very fairly considered as proved in its doctrine, by the testimonies which attended the baptism of Jesus, is beyond dispute, and the comparative view of both Scriptures therefore naturally tends to this conviction.

I pass on to the consideration of a third proof of the blessed Spirit's personality, from the testimony of the

sacred word, and which may be gathered from the benediction so frequently used by the apostle Paul in his writings. One example of this kind will be sufficient for our purpose. He concludes his second Epistle to the Corinthians in these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all," Amen. If personality be supposed, by implication, to be in the Lord Jesus Christ, or in God, for dispensing the blessings here wished or prayed for, the same reasoning will make it necessary that it should be equally so in the Holy Ghost. And can any one conceive that the qualities of *grace* in Christ and *love* in God (which without all doubt are such personal qualities, as afford the possibility of their being imparted from one to another,) can be more so, than the *communion*, which is also as directly implored from the Holy Ghost? are those qualities of *grace* in Christ, and *love* in God, to be joined with the *communion* of one, that is himself but a quality, an attribute, or energy, of Christ and God? On this presumption it becomes an interesting question, what is meant by the *communion* of an *energy?* And how is this *communion* conveyed, by the operation of an *energy*, into the hearts of believers?

And upon the supposition of the simple humanity of Jesus, the difficulty of apprehending the apostle's meaning, is yet more increased. For in this case, the *grace* of a *man*, is classed upon the same terms, and as a point of the same consequence to be wished, with the *love* of *God*, and the *communion* of the *Holy Ghost*. So that the apostle, after instructing his Corinthian converts in all the great truths of the gospel, closes his epistle with desiring, as a matter of the same moment to their future welfare, that the grace of a *creature*, and the love of the *Creator*, joined with the communion of an *energy* of the GODHEAD, might be with them all! To what a miserable expedient are men driven, while

denying either the divinity of Christ, or the personality of the blessed Spirit.*

One text more shall suffice, in support of the present argument. The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, speaking of our Lord, makes use of the following expression: "For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father," (Ephes. ii. 18.) It will not be questioned, to whom the phrase *through him* refers; the context manifestly shews, that it can be no other than Christ; and from hence it will appear, that this short sentence contains a summary proof of the same doctrine of the blessed Spirit's personality, and is as pertinent to the purpose as the preceding. To see the force of the argument, take the negative proposition of the case, and suppose the Spirit here spoken of, to be an emanation or quality of the Father; the sense of it

* The reader is desired to observe, that no arguments (unless incidentally noticed) are intended to be brought forward in *this* discourse, in proof of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost. This is reserved for the topic of another part of the work. The author wishes to advance by a regular gradation, through a chain of evidences which he hopes, with the divine blessing, may be at once convincing and unanswerable; first, to prove the certainty of the being of the Holy Ghost, from his evident operations in the world; and next, to shew the testimonies of his personality, from the declarations of Scripture on this point. And he flatters himself that the evidences to this purport, which will be produced in the present and succeeding sermons, the boldest sceptic will hardly be able to confront or deny. From this foundation the superstructure will be in no danger of being thrown down. The GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost will immediately follow the assurance of his personality, and appear to be the natural and unavoidable consequence resulting therefrom. Should these proofs, however, lead any reader further than he expected, even to the admitting the truth of the Catholic doctrine, the author hopes that he will have candour enough to acknowledge the conviction, and will discern from what point the ray of divine grace poured the light of instruction upon his soul. If this be not granted, all reasoning is fruitless. The plainest truths must lose their power of persuasion, when the mind is resolutely shut against their admission. Reader! bring with thee at least this qualification, an heart sincerely disposed to seek the truth, with an humble waiting and dependence upon the teachings of the blessed Spirit; and then it may reasonably be hoped that the promise of our Lord will be fulfilled; "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," (John viii. 32.)

then would be, "for through him (that is Christ) we both have an access by one Spirit (of the Father) unto the Father;" which would be a violation of all the terms of common speech, and in direct opposition to the clear manner of expression, observable in all the writings of St. Paul. To reduce it to any tolerable frame for apprehension, on this supposition, the phrase should have been worded, by *the* Spirit, and not in a specific distinction of *one* Spirit; for upon this notion, it might lead to a conjecture, whether there be more spirits than one in God. The original, however, will admit of no such variation: the express words are, "*in* (or by) *one* Spirit."*

These selections from Scripture may be sufficient to answer the purpose intended, of shewing, that according to the plain and unperverted language of the divine word, the Holy Ghost cannot be considered as an emanation, or energy of the GODHEAD, but a Being possessed of consciousness and intelligence, and to whom personal powers and properties clearly belong. More to the same amount might have been brought forward, but it would be lengthening the subject unnecessarily. In those I have produced, the personal distinction in the sacred Three (whatever that distinction may be,) hath, I hope, been rendered sufficiently obvious. Our subsequent inquiries will lead to the discovery of his dignity and character, when we come to examine, whether a being, distinguished by such properties, and to whom is ascribed an equal participation with the Father and the Son, in all the attributes of GODHEAD, must not, together with them, in the indivisibility of the divine essence, form the one necessarily self-existing God.

But the argument in proof of the Holy Ghost's personality, will be considerably strengthened, by a review of the testimony given to it by our blessed Lord. I shall produce a few instances of this kind, from the words and conversation of Christ, by way of illustration.

* Εν ενι πνευματι.

In that memorable conference, which Jesus held with his disciples, a short space before his sufferings and death, he promised to send to them the Holy Ghost; observing at the same time, that the expediency of his departure arose from this very circumstance, that he must go to send him unto them, for the event of his coming depended wholly upon it. "If I go not away (says Christ) the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you," (John xvi. 7.) There is something very remarkable in the terms of expression made use of by our divine Lord, through the whole of this conversation, which, when examined, will be found to afford a considerable degree of information, relative to the subject we are upon. Christ declares it to be a measure absolutely expedient, that he should leave his disciples, in order that he might *send* to them the blessed Spirit: a positive proof this of a personal distinction between Christ and the blessed Spirit, to admit of this mission, in the one from the other. And when he adds, that he will send the Holy Ghost to them, "from the Father;" this as clearly implies the same distinction of personality in the Holy Ghost, from the Father. Indeed his mission from either, or both, could be the event only of such distinction, and upon the presumption, that the Holy Ghost is not a *person*, but merely an *attribute*, or *emanation* of the Father; and Christ himself, not one in unity with the Father, the expression of our Lord is, beyond all conception, mysterious and inexplicable; for he declares the coming of the blessed Spirit to be the result of his own immediate authority and appointment. "If I depart (says Christ) I will send him unto you." Could he presume to say, that *he* would send him? What! could any created being, even the highest of all created beings, assume a language like this, as if the emanations of GODHEAD were at his disposal? But, perhaps, it will be replied, by way of invalidating the argument, that in another part of the same discourse, our Lord de-

clares, that he will pray the Father, and *he* shall send the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. Most certainly Christ hath said it; but this is so far from being a real objection to the doctrine, that it will be found, when analyzed, to be the fullest confirmation of it.

Nothing can be more palpable and clear, than that Christ, in all his conversation with his disciples, respecting the mission of the Holy Ghost, and particularly in the discourse now under consideration, ascribes his coming to the appointment of the Father and himself. He speaks of him indeed as the gift of both, and this (as was before observed) is of itself certainly sufficient to establish the assurance of the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost; for the mission from either or both, can consist only in this separability of person. And with respect to the same operations being indiscriminately applied to both the Father and the Son, what is the unavoidable inference of this fact, but what all the parts of Scripture concur in declaring; namely, that there subsists such an unity of essence between them, that the acts of the one are at the same time no less the acts of the other; and though evidently distinct in person, yet by a mysterious, and to us incomprehensible union of Being, they are but one in nature; agreeably to what our blessed Lord continually taught: "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," (John v. 19.) "I and my Father are one," (John x. 30.) "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father in me," (John xiv. 9, 11.) Attend, I beseech you, to this interesting part of Scripture, of our Lord's farewell conversation with his disciples; and the more closely you inspect it, the more plainly will you perceive strong leading points in proof of this first and grand article of the Christian creed; that there are three distinct persons, clearly defined by their respective properties and operations, and yet as evidently united in the one indivisible essence of GODHEAD.

I have already stated the evidences of the divine unity of Christ with the Father. The person of the Holy Ghost, and his participation no less in the same mysterious essence of the Godhead, will, I think, as fully appear from the following considerations.

"I will pray the Father, (says Christ) and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," (John xiv. 16.) Another Comforter! what can more strkingly define the person of the Holy Ghost, and more accurately distinguish him from the person of Jesus, than this appellation of *another* Comforter? And yet, that the great doctrine of the unity, subsisting between them in the divine essence, might not be overlooked or forgotten, in the very following verse but one, after this declaration, Christ expressly adds, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," (John xiv. 18.) So that the Holy Ghost is positively said to be *another* Comforter, which should come unto the disciples; and still Christ would not leave them comfortless, but *he* would come unto them. Does not this very plainly imply a relationship and affinity, of a most peculiar and inexpressibly intimate nature, subsisting in those sacred characters? And upon any other ground than that of the union which I have mentioned, (and which, let it be further observed, is not barely the doctrine of this place, but is the general doctrine of Scripture) is not the expression unwarrantable, complex, and even contradictory? But accepted in this sense, agreeably to the analogy of the Catholic faith, the whole becomes plain and intelligible, as far, at least, as our faculties are competent to the apprehension of the subject, and a striking agreement and uniformity are discovered to pervade every part of the divine word.

But this is not all the proof we derive from this portion of Scripture, of the personality of the blessed Spirit. The distinction of character given to the Holy Ghost by our Lord, in the appellation of another Comforter, does

not more accurately define this doctrine, than the mode of operation, by which his agency was to be carried on, becomes demonstrative of the same. Among other evidences of personal action, that of *receiving* and *giving*, are clearly properties belonging to an intelligent conscious agent; and in this same discourse, Christ hath represented the Holy Ghost under such characters, as can leave no question in the mind but that the Being who possessed them must be a person. "He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. He shall not speak of himself," (John xvi. 13, 14.) Surely to receive from another must argue *being* in the receiver, and an evident distinction from the person from whom he receives; and the very possibility of speaking, and not speaking of himself, must imply the certainty of his being and identity, as distinguishable from the person of him of whom he speaks, and that hath a *self*, if I may be allowed the expression. I conceive it to be impossible, upon any principles of common sense, to interpret these sayings of Jesus, but as so many testimonies of a distinct personality in the Holy Ghost; and if they are not admitted in this light, I despair of finding proofs of any one proposition in nature, which depends for its certainty, not so much upon direct as collateral evidence. Nor, by the way, (it may be observed while we are upon the subject) are these things more convincing of the *person* than those characters of omnipresence and invisibility, under which our Lord represents the Holy Ghost in the same chapter, are of his GODHEAD. "He shall abide with you for ever. Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," (John xiv. 16, 17.) To possess such attributes, as permanency of existence, invisibility of nature, and perpetuity of power; to be with his people at all times, and in all places, and to abide with them for ever, are such properties, as no being less than divine, can be

distinguished by. And shall we then receive such accounts from Jesus himself of the Holy Ghost, and yet entertain doubts either of his person or GODHEAD?

Before I dismiss the consideration of this memorable conference of Christ with his apostles, I ought to observe that the part which we have reviewed, is not more in point to the person and divinity of the Holy Ghost, than the whole is in correspondence with the great doctrine of the divine unity in the essence of the Godhead. Without multiplying evidences in proof, it will be sufficient to observe, that though Christ declared, that he would not leave his people comfortless, but that *he* would come unto them; and at the same time the Holy Ghost was expressly promised to come, and as *another* Comforter; yet it is no less said, that the Father also would come, and dwell in the hearts of believers: "If a man love me, (says Christ) my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him," (John xiv. 23.) So that in the same discourse of our Lord, and within a few verses of each other, here are the whole sacred *Three*, promised to the disciples, under the same character, and such a character as must include every thing of GODHEAD in the performance thereof. Let the sceptic of any denomination, if he can, reason away the plain doctrine here expressed: let him deny the personality of each; or admit the personality, but under the perfect conviction of the unity of the divine essence!

The assurance of this grand and unalterable foundation of our holy faith, though always impressed upon my mind in indelible characters, yet, in the moment while reviewing afresh the incontrovertible evidences of it, fills me with a more than ordinary joy and peace in believing. I hope therefore, you will excuse my desiring you to attend to these testimonies, with that awakened concern, which so grand and interesting a subject demands; until you have found the promise of your Redeemer, with respect to this gift of the Spirit, fulfilled in your

wn heart. If a man has never felt the proof of his ivine operation in himself, is it not from the very ause, which Christ has assigned; "whom the world annot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth im?" If this prejudice hath taken possession of the nderstanding, it is morally impossible for the truth to nter in. The eye of the mind, like the eye of the body, ıay be clouded with films which shall obstruct all vision. ınd these are what may literally be called cataracts, ccasioning mental blindness. And as our blessed Lord ı his unequalled manner of reasoning hath observed; if the very light that is in a man be darkness, how reat is that darkness!" (Matt. vi. 23.) But with respect) the true believer, "in whose heart the love of God is ıed abroad, by the power of the Holy Ghost," (Rom. 5;) he knows by experience, the certainty of these uths, by the effect of their operations: "ye know im, (says our divine Lord) for he dwelleth with you ıd shall be in you," (John xiv. 17.) Happy the man that hath received this testimony, and set to his seal ıat God is true," (John iii. 33;) to whose spirit, "the pirit itself beareth witness," that he is of "the children God," (Rom. viii. 16.)

Again, our blessed Lord in a well-known passage, hen speaking of the unpardonable sin, hath very fully certained the personality of the Holy Ghost; and, in e statement of this crime, hath as clearly proved it, as ıy indirect testimony can be supposed to do. "All ıs shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blas- ıemies wherewith soever they shall blapheme. But : that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath :ver forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damna- ɔn," (Mark iii. 28, 29.) I shall not trespass upon ɔur patience, by entering upon that interesting ques- ɔn, which hath already engaged so much attention, ıd received such ample discussion, in what the nature ıd malignity of this sin consists, and the reason of its

being unpardonable. Though it forms, no doubt, at all times, a very important subject, and demands the most serious inquiry, yet it is not immediately connected with the object I have in view.* It is sufficient for my pre-

* Though the limits I must observe, to suit the time of preaching, oblige me to express myself with all possible brevity, in the body of the discourse; yet I hope I shall be pardoned for the liberty I have occasionally taken, in the introduction of the several notes, which are scattered through this work, upon particular passages, which seemed to demand this attention. The present is of this nature, and ought not, from the very interesting question involved in it, to be passed over unnoticed. It is possible, that these discourses may fall into the hands of some serious, but timid Christians, whose minds may have felt a considerable degree of apprehension, from the possibility of the commission of a sin, declared by the Son of God himself, to be totally irremissible. For the comfort and instruction of such, I would beg to subjoin an observation or two, which through divine assistance, may serve to explain the circumstances of the case, and in some measure relieve the mind from all unreasonable and improper anxiety upon this point.

It should be recollected, that when Christ expressed himself in those awful terms, concerning the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, and declared it to be incapable of remission, he had been demonstrating one of the highest acts of Supreme power, in casting out a devil. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, in whose presence the miracle was wrought, were so lost to all grace, that in the most daring instance of profaneness they imputed it to the agency of the infernal spirit: to ascribe *that*, to the power of the devil, which was evidently among the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, was blasphemy indeed! Upon this occasion, our divine Lord solemnly declared, that though "all manner of sin should be forgiven unto men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they might blaspheme," and adding, in still more endearing terms of compassion, that "whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven;" yet closes the account with this awful assurance, that "whosoever blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Because (says the Evangelist) "they said he hath an unclean spirit:" this explanatory verse at the end of the sentence, very clearly defines the nature of the unpardonable sin, and shews most evidently in what it consisted; namely, that it was the wilful and malicious perversion of truth, in ascribing to the agency of the devil, what was manifestly wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; and therefore such horrible and daring blasphemy, proceeding from such a wicked disposition of mind, so effectually deprived the authors of it, from ever receiving in themselves those gracious operations of the Holy Ghost, by which alone "a spirit of grace and supplication" can be awakened in the mind: that from being hardened against compunction for their offence, it was impossible they could become suitable objects of mercy, and the sin continuing unrepented of, continued unpar-

sent purpose to observe, that it is beyond all doubt of peculiar malignity, from being the only sin absolutely irremissible, while every other species of blasphemy is declared not to be precluded from pardon. But whatever the reasons may be, which make it so, the thing itself very fully proves, in my esteem, the certainty of the person of the Holy Ghost. For on the supposition that the Holy Ghost is but an attribute, or emanation of the GODHEAD; in this case, an offence against the Omnipresence, the Omniscience, or any other of the attributes of the GODHEAD, might, according to its atrocity, be rendered equally unpardonable. But even under this idea, it would be still unaccountable, that a sin committed against an attribute of the GODHEAD,

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doned. Hence it is very obvious that this denunciation of Christ, in its primary meaning, had a peculiar reference to the persons with whom he was then discoursing. But that either the crime or punishment threatened to it was so limited, that the commission and consequence of it in after ages, is impossible, God forbid that I should presume to say! It is exceedingly to be apprehended by what we behold in life, that from the same presumptuous reasonings and corrupt passions of the human mind, which gave birth to it originally among the Scribes and Pharisees, men may now walk but too near the confines of it. But while the possibility of its commission ought to have a very powerful effect upon persons of this complexion, to keep them from presumption; the distance by which humble minds are preserved through the grace of God, from such transgressions, may serve to convince the timid Christian, that his apprehensions concerning it are altogether ill-founded. They do in effect refute themselves. For if you fear, lest you should have incurred the unpardonable sin, your fears become the strongest assurance to the contrary. There are no apprehensions of this kind in the breast, where it hath been committed; there is no compunction, no sorrow of heart, but a total dereliction of the Holy Spirit; like that of the Pharisees of old, an indifference, an insensibility, distinguishes the conduct as much after transgression as before; and men live regardless both of the heinousness of their sin, and of the departure of the blessed Spirit from them. "Ephraim is joined unto idols: let him alone!" How awful soever in the contemplation such a state is to the serious Christian, it must convince him, if he reflects at all, that it cannot be his own. Your fears and anxieties may be proper to induce humility, but they are at the same time the truest indications of your safety; for they spring not from nature, but from grace; and where grace reigns in the heart, the servant of God is kept "from presumptuous sins; and undefiled and innocent from the great offence."

should be irremissible, while against the GODHEAD himself "all manner of sin and blasphemy" should be capable of forgiveness. Besides, upon the supposition that the Holy Ghost is but an attribute of the Father, whatever sin is committed against the one, necessarily includes the other; for the one proceeds from the other; but Christ hath evidently expressed a distinction, in admitting the possibility of sinning, both against the person of the Father, and of the Son, and in a manner which shall be venial, while he declares, that there is an offence, capable of being committed against the Holy Ghost, which precludes the possibility of forgiveness. Surely nothing can more strikingly identify the person of the Holy Ghost, than this distinction. Sin against God must include sin against either of his attributes, as the greater proposition includes the less; and consequently, if there be a crime, into which a man may fall, against the Holy Ghost, beyond the reach of pardon, while at the same time, *all manner* of sins and blasphemies, committed against God, may be remitted: a volume of arguments cannot be more convincing, in the demonstration of any given truth, than this is, in proving that such a doctrine can only be admissible, upon the certainty of a distinction of person.

While we are upon this remarkable text of Scripture, I should not think myself justified, if I omitted the observation, that the self-same argument, which implies the personality, proves no less the GODHEAD also, of the Holy Ghost. When our Lord says, that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," or as, in the parallel passage by St. Mark, it is expressed, "and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme;" these terms very plainly state the nature of the offence, and indicate the Being, against whom the commision can be only applicable, for blasphemies can relate to no other, than a certain species of offence committed against God: it would be a perversion of language to talk of blasphemies against man. If then all manner of sin

shall be forgiven unto men and blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme; and yet there is one offence of this kind, when committed against the Holy Ghost, incapable of remission; is this possible but under the clear connection of his Divinity? does not the very name and nature of the sin, define the character of the Being against whom it is committed? And if blasphemy cannot be committed but against God, and yet is capable of being committed against the Holy Ghost, will any man refuse to see, that the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost is fully implied? must not indeed the consequence as undeniably follow, that the Holy Ghost is God, as any demonstration of the plainest proposition of Euclid?

These arguments appear to me, I confess, so very decisive, in proof both of the personality and divinity of the blessed Spirit, as cannot fail, I persuade myself, of carrying conviction with them, wherever they are duly and thoroughly considered.

But as additional evidence may be gratifying, you will not think it tedious, I hope, if I examine a single testimony more, from the words of Jesus, upon this important question, and especially as we are furnished with one of a very weighty nature, from the memorable form of baptism, which our blessed Lord appointed, as a standing ordinance for the initiation of believers, within the pale of his church. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Whatever was the intention of our blessed Lord, in the ordination of this ordinance; however differently the service itself may have been understood and accepted in the Christian world, one thing must be allowed; that Christ himself, at the time he appointed it, could neither be unconscious of his own nature, nor of the real character of the Holy Ghost: of consequence, he cannot be supposed to have instituted a service of universal obligation and of perpetual extent, which should be liable

to ambiguity, or capable of misleading his people. This I think will hardly be disputed. Let us now examine the form of baptism, prescribed by Christ, under this idea, and see what information we can derive from it, in the particular point of doctrine we are now upon. "Go ye, and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I presume it will be readily granted, that the terms here made use of, plainly indicate, that converts to the gospel, were to be baptized in the joint name of the sacred Three: for there is no distinction made between the one and the other; they are all equally mentioned alike, without any title or character of eminence prefixed to their respective names; and if divinity by implication be supposed in the Father from the solemn dedication of Christians to him in baptism; the same must be understood of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But let us meet the objection to this doctrine, in every point of view imaginable. Upon the presumption that Christ is one with the Father, according to his own express declaration, and yet that the Holy Ghost is not a person, but an emanation, or attribute of the GODHEAD; how strange and unaccountable is it, that our Lord should join in the same form of worship, and without the least intimation of any distinction, two persons, and one attribute; and command his followers to be dedicated thereby to the joint service of the Father, the Son, and an attribute of the Father, and the Son! What adoration can be paid to an attribute? does not the very notion of God include the attributes of God? and wherefore this distinction?

But supposing that Jesus is simply no other than a man, the difficulty of apprehension is increased. In this case we are baptized into the joint name, and of consequence called upon to the joint obedience of three in in one, between whom, no conceivable distance can be sufficient to demonstrate their infinite disparity. And did our blessed Lord really mean this, when he appointed

this solemn service? was it his intention, that we should be baptized, in the name of the Father, as *God*, of the Son, as *man*, and the Holy Ghost, as an *attribute* of God? What an awful breach of the first commandment would it have been, to join a *creature* with a *Creator*, in the same form of dedication, and to separate as it were, between God and his Spirit, by introducing a man between them, and giving him precedence to the Holy Ghost! Are the persons who seriously adopt this opinion, aware, what a heavy charge is indirectly brought by it, against the Son of God?

Neither is the case at all mended by those who, to obviate this difficulty, are content to allow a subordinate degree of GODHEAD, to the Son, and Holy Ghost, and thus by endeavouring to qualify the form of baptism, in supposing this inferiority, have dug up the foundation-stone of all religion, in the unity of the Godhead, and made Christ the author of confusion, in building polytheism upon the ruins.

There is no possibility therefore of receiving this text of Scripture in any other sense, according to the common acceptation of words, and the very reason of things, than what hath been invariably understood by all the orthodox believers, from the first establishment of the church, namely, that the Holy Ghost is a person, and that his GODHEAD, together with the GODHEAD of the Father, and the Son, subsist in one undivided essence. And in the further confirmation of this creed, the service included in the words of Christ's appointment, becomes still more explanatory.

Suppose it was intended by Christ, as a federal rite, to testify a covenant between God and man. That part of it which God engages to perform is stipulated in the joint name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But if the Son and Holy Ghost be not possessed of GODHEAD with the Father, how can they have ability sufficient to bestow what is promised, in this Christian

covenant, to believers? Can any being, which, if not the Creator, must be created (for there is no medium of existence between,) grant the gift of eternal life, as the reward of faithfulness, unless he himself possesses eternal life, underived and independent? And with respect to the obligation on the part of man, can a man with safety engage to perform certain duties, in equal degrees and with equal reverence, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as to the Father (which, if the baptismal service implies any thing of this kind to either, must imply it equally to all,) and yet imagine the Son to be a created being, and the Holy Ghost nothing more than an emanation of the Father? If the Son be a created being, is he not himself as much obliged to the worship of the Creator, as any other creature can be? And if the Holy Ghost be no more than an emanation or attribute of the Father, can he be distinguishable from the Father as an object of worship? And under these circumstances would Christ have appointed a solemn service in his religion, and placed it at the very door of his church, that no one should enter in without complying with its terms, which enjoins equal honours to God, and to a man, and an attribute of God! I shudder while I speak; but the conclusion is inevitable, if this be really the state of the case, that Christ is but a man, and the Holy Ghost an emanation only of the GODHEAD. Jesus hath then obliged all his disciples to the commission of idolatry, and is literally the minister of sin!

And if baptism be considered as a means of grace, for washing away the guilt of original sin, the same train of arguments, and proceeding from the same causes, must operate with equal conviction, to prove both the person of the Holy Ghost, and the GODHEAD of the sacred Three. The observation which the Scribes made upon our Lord's forgiveness of sins, though the effect of irritation and anger, and applied most impro-

perly in reference to him, was yet, in respect to the doctrine itself, perfectly just and well-founded: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark ii. 7.) None most unquestionably but God can absolve the sinner. It is His sole prerogative. But if there be a remission of sins in baptism, nothing can be clearer, than that this remission is made in the name, and by the joint authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Will any man recur to the former idea of supposing, that this is one God, and two inferior gods, or two creatures? or will he imagine, that it is one God, and a creature, and an attribute, all classed together into one form as dispensing the same act of grace? Is the Divinity become mutable, and though having once awfully declared, that he is a jealous God, jealous of his sovereignty and power, and that he would by no means give his honour to another, yet hath now taken into the government with himself inferior characters, and delegated them with equal authority? And hath the Divine Author of Christianity really appointed a standing ordinance in his church, which from such premises cannot but lead to such conclusions?—What infinite cause have we to praise the Divine benignity, for preventing such errors! The utmost torturing of expression, the most violent perversion of terms, cannot explain away the very palpable sense and doctrine, contained in this solemn service of our blessed Lord's appointment. Baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," carries with it every idea of person and divinity, in the sacred characters specifically enumerated; divine in nature, indivisible in essence, but distinguished at the same time, by those respective personalities, in which they are revealed to us, as jointly engaged in the great work of man's redemption. And I cannot forbear adding, what must be a gratifying consideration to every true believer, and which he ought not by any means to overlook, that our blessed Lord did not

command his religion to commence with this solemn proclamation of faith, in the name of the sacred Three, but with some important design, and to answer some very special purpose: and what design could be more important, or what purpose more special, than to check the daring hand of heresy, by a fence of this nature? Foreseeing the errors which would arise, to disturb the peace of the church, after his visible presence was withdrawn; either from the artifice of the common enemy, or from the corruption of the human heart; he provided in this memorial of himself and his religion, a remedy of universal operation, which no sophistry should evade, nor malice prevent; and by placing it in the very title-page of his gospel, hath kept the holy volume for ever sacred, against the admission of heresy, and preserved the faith therein pure, by an inviolable barrier.*

I have now finished the first branch of my subject, in the selection of a number of passages from Scripture (and I hope sufficient to the purpose,) in proof of the personality of the Holy Ghost. There remains another part to be considered, equally illustrative of the same doctrine; in the *properties* and *operations*, as well *active* as *passive*, which are ascribed to the blessed Spirit, in the word of God, but which cannot on any consideration be admissible, but under the assurance of his per-

* As this view of things cannot but be replete with the fullest satisfaction, in the breast of every sincere believer; so must it be peculiarly so, to the faithful servant in Jesus, in the exercise of his sacred function. And I hope, my brethren in the ministry will forgive me, if I add, that I have been the more diffuse in my observations upon this important part of the Scripture, not barely by way of shewing its testimony to the point I had particularly in view, but of illustrating also a doctrine intimately connected with our sacred commission, and forming the very charter of the Christian church. To have proper conceptions of the dignity of each of the divine characters, in whose name he baptizes, cannot but be an object of the first magnitude, to every one who is of the Holy Order; for humanity shudders with horror, at the idea of baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while believing the Son to be a creature, and the Holy Ghost an emanation only of the Godhead.

sonality. This however, with divine permission, must be reserved for another discourse. In the mean time let it not be thought a tedious or unnecessary extension of the subject. I pity the man, who feels himself uninterested in the prosecution of an inquiry so highly important, and can turn from it with a fastidiousness and disregard. What an infinite reproach is it, that men of the world shall never know what satiety is, while engaged in the several vain objects of their affection; but the smallest application to divine things, is enough to cloy and sicken the appetite, and excite disgust! Go, ye careless professors of religion, whose attention cannot be kept awake, either by the excellence of the sacred subject, or the awful interest, in which its consequence involves you; go, and prosecute those delights, which better correspond with the ardour of your inclination: but be it the ambition of all real lovers of God, to imbibe a portion of the Psalmist's spirit, and to form their principles by the standard of his piety. "Oh! how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might be occupied in thy word. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey unto my mouth. The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

SERMON IV.

1 TIMOTHY IV. 1.

The Spirit speaketh expressly.

IT was with reluctance that I closed the preceding Sermon, having left the induction of evidences unfinished, which are in proof of the blessed Spirit's personality. In the delivery of all religious discourses, as well from the press as the pulpit, it is an object, every way desirable, to adopt the closest comprehension of subject, and to avoid all unnecessary divisions: for they only tend to protract the issue of the question, and thereby considerably enervate the strength of the argument. Whereas on the contrary, the testimonies of any given truth, when concentrated, act with united vigour; and like the rays of light, converging to a focus, assist each other by their reciprocal operation. But however disadvantageous or unpleasant the interruption, it was both expedient and unavoidable. While attentive to the great object in view, I thought it proper to consult your ease and accommodation. And though anxious above all things, to establish your minds in the firm conviction of "the faith once delivered to the saints;" it became a duty, not to exhaust your patience, in trespassing upon it more at one time, than was absolutely needful.

I would willingly persuade myself, that the impressions from the last discourse, are still in your remembrance; and instead of being worn off, have rather left you in a disposition to believe, that the Holy Ghost is a *person*. Under this idea, I shall proceed without any recapitulation of the arguments then offered, to bring

before you the evidences yet remaining unnoticed, in support of the same doctrine. The testimonies to this great truth, which have been hitherto reviewed, were comprised in the selection of a few passages from Scripture (sufficient indeed to our purpose,) directly leading to this conclusion. The other branch of the argument, which is now to be considered, arises from the properties and operations, both *active* and *passive*, which are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, in the same word of God; and which on every consideration cannot be admissible, but under the assurance of his personality.

If we collect the whole of the evidence resulting from hence, into one great mass of particulars, we shall find, that the blessed Spirit is described, as possessing all those *qualities*, by which the certainty of person is definable: and that he is distinguished also by such *properties*, as are known among men, under the character of *affections;* which though widely different in their nature and effects, from human passions, yet for our better apprehension, are expressed by such appellations. Thus he is said, to "create and give life," (Job xxxiii. 4;) to *uphold*, and, by taking away the breath of his creatures, to *destroy*, (Psalm civ. 29, 30:) he is said also to *teach*, (John xiv. 26:) and to "guide into all truth," (John xvi. 13:) he was seen, "in a bodily shape like a dove," (Luke iii. 22:) he hath spoken expressly, (1 Tim. iv. 1:) by *prophets*, (2 Peter i. 21:) to *apostles*, (Acts xiii. 2:) and to *churches*, (Rev. ii. 7:) he hath appointed *ministers*, (Acts xx. 28:) sent *messengers*, (Acts xiii. 4:) he hath borne *witness*, (Heb. xv. 10:) hath been appealed to *as* a *witness*, (Rom. ix. 1:) hath "testified of Christ," (John xv. 26:) he is described as possessing all *personal* properties, such as "joy and grief," (Eph. iv. 30:) a *mind*, (Rom. viii. 27:) a *will*, (1 Cor. xii. 11:) and *power*, (Rom. xv. 13:) is declared capable of being *tempted*, (Acts v. 9:) of being *resisted*, (Acts vii. 51:) of having *despite* done unto him, (Heb. x. 29:) and of

being *blasphemed*, (Mark iii. 29:) all of which, more or less, must be allowed to be very highly demonstrative of personal consciousness and identity.

It may indeed very safely be admitted, without the smallest injury to our argument, that the whole of what is here said, in relation to the Spirit, is not equally express to this purpose. *Some*, no doubt, of the properties ascribed to him, if separately and abstractedly considered, do not so clearly imply a personality, but that they may be understood of the Holy Ghost, on the supposition, that he be no other than an emanation, or attribute of the GODHEAD.* But though from the review of single and detached passages, this may be said of *some*, it cannot of *all;* and it is from the concurring evidence of the whole, tending as they do, to the natural illustration of each other, that the inference is deduced. And when it be further observed, that the doctrine of the blessed Spirit's person, does not rest its certainty upon this, or any other single testimony, however strong that testimony may be in itself, but arises out of several distinct particulars, forming an unity of evidence to the

* Every thing that the utmost stretch of reason shall suggest, of incompetency in some of the passages selected, in proof of our argument, may be allowed; and yet enough left to establish the doctrine. Let it be supposed, that there are several, where the expressions are not so clear and determinate, of the Holy Spirit's being a person, but that the meaning may be interpreted either way, for, or against it, without any violation of the context. No doubt the Spirit of God, is frequently by a metonymy, put for God, And when we consider the mysteriousness of that union, by which the sacred characters exist in the essence of GODHEAD, this may easily be accounted for. But if the passages are as numerous, which evidently indicate personality in the blessed Spirit, and which cannot indeed upon any other principles be explained, but under this acceptation; and what still makes more for the argument; if those passages are supported no less by proofs of a collateral nature, and all concurring to the same end; the doctrine must necessarily and unavoidably follow. How far it is illustrated and explained in these discourses, to the satisfaction of the reader, must be left to his own determination, when he shall have gone through the whole of the evidences offered to his perusal, and shall have carefully examined them, under the divine assistance, with a candid and unprejudiced mind.

same amount, then every circumstance possesses its specific importance in the argument, and the whole together becomes an accumulated body of proofs, at once decisive and unanswerable.

That we are to understand what is said of the Holy Ghost, in these passages of Scripture, and confirmed in many others of a similar import, as of a being possessed of personal identity and intelligence, will be evident from the analyzation of any of the characters under which he is described. For example, the apostle Paul speaking of the Holy Ghost, declares, that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," (1 Cor. ii. 10.) Here is expressed in these words, a consciousness of Being in the blessed Spirit, implied from this ability of action: and a distinction also of person is as expressly intimated, between the Spirit, which is said to *search*, and God, whose deep things are *searched*. And it is this distinction of persons, which becomes the foundation for the distinction of character. For on the supposition, that they are one and the same person, the sense would be, "that the Spirit of God searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of himself;" which would be a solecism and absurdity: and yet, upon the supposition that the Holy Ghost is not a person, but an emanation, or energy only of the GODHEAD; this, and no other, must be the obvious meaning of the apostle's language. By every argument therefore, that we infer a distinction of person, between the Father and the Son, from the specific characters, under which each is revealed in Scripture; by the same we must conclude, that there is a distinction personally considered also, between the Spirit and the Father, from the different acts here expressed of their agency. In both instances, the rule of reasoning is the same. For as the Father and the Son, though participating in the one essence of GODHEAD, being by their respective operations clearly defined as distinct persons, and allowed to be such, there cannot be the vestige of a

reason shewn, on the same premises, for denying personality to the Holy Ghost. And this single argument, plain and simple as it is, must be in itself sufficient to demonstrate the certainty of this doctrine.*

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* It is hoped that the present discourse, which from the nature of the subject cannot but be chiefly argumentative, will not however be altogether barren of spiritual improvement. The author's design would be miserably frustated indeed, if while endeavouring to convince the *sceptic*, his observations yielded no advantage to the *believer*. Sincere professors of the gospel can hardly require information, that there is not a single character of the blessed Spirit, which may be reviewed in favour of his personality, but what furnishes, at the same time, some more particular motive to awaken the exercises of faith and godliness. When, for example, the certainty of his person is inferred from that solemn view of his divine operations, in which he is described as "searching all things, yea the deep things of God;" must it not strike every serious mind who is convinced of this great truth, that if the "deep things of God" are open to the investigation of the blessed Spirit, how intimately acquainted must he be with all the circumstances of *human* action? and is it possible, that the believer, while recollecting whose awful presence and inspection he is continually under, can forget at the same time, what a sanctity of character the assurance of it is calculated to induce? Surrounded as we are and encompassed (if I may so speak) with the immensity of such a Being, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid;" will not the prayer almost involuntarily be excited in the breast of the godly, that the "thoughts of the heart may be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?" Men of the world, from being absorbed in the different employments, which occupy the attention of the frivolous, and the vain; engaged either in the hurry and bustle of life, or lost amidst the pleasurable pursuits of it, will suffer the blessed Spirit to pass by in all his operations both of providence and grace unnoticed, and disregarded. But he, to whose awakened and enlightened mind, the consciousness of his perpetual agency is familiarized; who is accustomed to contemplate Him, in the tempest, and in the storm, in the calm of life, and the still small voice: such views of this great Being will at all times call up suitable affections, and he will need no human monitor to remind him, either of whose presence or inspection he is constantly under, or of the corresponding train of duties which may be supposed to result therefrom.

This view of the spiritual improvement and consolation, which ariseth out of one part of the Holy Ghost's operations, opens a subject which it might take pages to fill. It is only thrown in here, by way of example of similar reflections, capable of being reduced from all. And the author consoles himself with the idea, that in the many other parts of this work, where to avoid prolixity such practical observations are omitted, the serious reader under divine assistance will himself be ablest to supply such deficiency.

In like manner the same inference must result from that view of the blessed Spirit's operation, when he is said to make "intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," (Rom. viii. 26.) Here again, upon the supposition that the Holy Ghost is not a distinct person in the Godhead, but an attribute only of the Father, he would be making intercession to *himself*. No doubt, both the manner of this distinction, and the mode of operation, must by their very nature be wonderfully mysterious to us, and past all ability of perfect apprehension. In a scheme so awful and sublime, as that which reveals "God in Christ reconciling the world to himself," (2 Cor. v. 19,) no human faculties can be commensurate to the comprehension of the subject. But though in the indivisibility of the Godhead all distinction is to us lost, yet in the several acts performed by each, in the economy of man's redemption, we discover enough to form a clear idea of an identity of person. And as the duties corresponding to each are so plainly and forcibly inculcated through the whole of Scripture, the distinction of persons, which is the origin of those duties, may be supposed to be sufficiently implied and explained by the different acts, the sacred Three are revealed to us as performing.

These evidences are to my apprehension, I confess, so very satisfactory and convincing, that it is only wonderful to me how any person should be fond of departing from the plain and obvious sense of such passages of Scripture, to seek after some hidden meaning, where the terms are too palpable to admit of it. But in order to invalidate the testimony, which is so direct to the purpose, in proof of the blessed Spirit's being a person, it hath been a favourite expedient among the unbelievers in this great article of faith, when pressed closely by arguments of this nature, to take shelter under some supposed figure of speech in the sacred writers: and because they are known occasionally to make use of me-

taphor, they would presume that nothing more is intended by it in those passages which ascribe personality to the Holy Ghost.

It is worthy observation, that the same subterfuge was very early had recourse to by the impugners of the divinity of Jesus, and hath been brought forward by their successors from age to age ever since, in order to undermine that grand principle of our holy faith. Hence, when the creation of the world is said by the evangelist St. John, in the exordium of his gospel, to be the act of the divine Logos, and in a form of words which it might have been supposed no sophistry could have evaded; though the testimony of St. John is supported also by that of the apostle Paul, if possible yet more full to the purpose; and though as if to put an end to all dispute, whether the meaning of the evangelist was to be taken literally or figuratively, he expressly adds, that this divine Logos, who made the world, and "without whom was not any thing made that was made, was (himself) made flesh and tabernacled among us," (John i. 14;) (an event in itself utterly impossible, but on the presumption of the fact being in *reality* and not *figuratively*, as he hath stated it) though these truths, I say, are as plain and palpable as words can make them, yet there are not wanting persons who can resolve the whole into a mere figure of rhetoric, and under the presumptuous idea, that the expressions *may be* metaphorical, venture to reject the important doctrine they evidently contain.

From similar reasons, and by similar methods, the person of the blessed Spirit hath been denied; and in reply to those very declarations of holy Scripture, which are so pointed and express to the certainty of it, as to be incapable of refutation, by any *direct* argument, the difficulty is attempted to be removed, by means of fallacious reasoning. It is said that the same causes, from whence is inferred the person of the Holy Ghost, by analogy will hold good of inanimate things, and even moral vir-

tues to which sometimes in Scripture personal properties are ascribed. As for example, the *heavens* and the *earth* are called upon by the prophet to "hear," (Isaiah i. 2;) the *fields*, and *floods* are said to "clap their hands," (Psalm xcviii. 8;) and the *waters* are represented as "seeing God" and "being afraid," (Psalm lxxvii. 16.) And St. Paul in his beautiful description of the evangelical virtue of charity, hath *personified* it through almost a whole chapter, (1 Cor. xiii.) Hence therefore they would infer, that whatever is said in Scripture, in allusion to the personality of the blessed Spirit, may be supposed also to be figurative, and ought to be explained in much the same terms. But such quibbles hardly merit reply. Nothing but the ingenuity of sophistry, whose prolific womb teems but with monstrous and preternatural productions, could have given them birth. Plain understandings would have been at a loss to trace a similarity, which indeed hath no existence but in the imagination, between the personification of inanimate things, occasionally introduced by way of heightening a representation; and that uniform and invariable manner of expression, which is observable in every part of the divine word, in relation to the person and being of the Holy Ghost. A writer of the last century, (Dr. Owen,) in his treatise on the Holy Spirit, hath answered this objection in so masterly a style, and by such an happy vein of ridicule (which is indeed the only way of replying to it, for it deserves none more serious,) that I cannot perhaps more effectually expose the fallacy of such reasoning, than by stating it in his own words. "If (says he) a wise and honest man should come and tell you, that in a certain country, where he has been, there is an excellent governor, who wisely discharges the duties of his office; who hears causes, discerns right, distributes justice, relieves the poor, and comforts the distressed; would you not believe that he intended by this description, a righteous, wise, diligent, and intelligent *person?* What

else could any man living imagine? But now suppose that a *stranger* should come and tell you that the former information, which you had received was indeed true, but that no *person* was meant by it; it was only a figure of the *sun* or the *wind*, which by their benign influences rendered the country fruitful and temperate, and disposed the inhabitants to natural kindness and benignity." This is exactly the case in the instance before us. The Scriptures tell us that the Holy Ghost governs the church, appoints overseers of it, discerns and judges all things, comforts the faint, strengthens the weak; is grieved and provoked by sin; and that in these and many other affairs, he works, and orders, and disposes all things according to the counsel of his own will. Can any man credit this testimony, and conceive otherwise of the blessed Spirit, than as of an holy, wise, and gracious God? Is it possible that nothing more is intended by these expressions, than only an *accident*, a *quality*, an *effect* or *influence* of the power of God, which doth all these things *figuratively;* hath a will *figuratively;* an understanding *figuratively;* is sinned against *figuratively*, and the like? What can any man, not bereft of natural reason as well as spiritual light conclude; but rather that the Scripture designed to draw him into fatal errors, or that those, who would impose such a sense upon the word of God, are corrupt seducers, who would rob him of his faith and his comforts? This in short is the issue of the argument. There is no other alternative, one of these opinions must be adopted. Take the negative of the proposition, and suppose the blessed Spirit *not* a person, and what a wonderful concatenation of causes must it have been, to have brought together such a correspondence of testimonies, as you have already in part seen (to say nothing of others, yet to be considered,) to induce the belief of the blessed Spirit's personality, when that personality hath no existence? Nay, more than this; that the inspired word of God, which was professedly

written to be the guide of human life, and to conduct the mind into all truth, should have proved the reverse of its design, and have led only into error and confusion. Gracious Lord! how unjust were this accusation! Its beneficent design has been fully answered. The Scriptures have sufficiently attested the fact itself, of the certainty of the person of the blessed Spirit, to procure the unreserved belief of all humble and teachable minds. And however incomprehensible the doctrine of a plurality of persons, in the indivisibility of the Godhead, may be, yet the truth rests not upon our perfect apprehension, no more than the intrinsic excellency of our faith will depend upon the accuracy of our judgment respecting it. Our acquiescence in divine truths, as far as the article of believing is concerned, being the great duty required; to obtain this, a competent degree of information is afforded, which may procure the assent of the mind, without offering any violence to the understanding. And when we consider the darkness and imperfection of our present state; the weak and immature faculties of man; how little he is able to investigate the causes of the effects continually produced in himself, and in all around him; the only wonder is, that in a subject so infinitely great and mysterious, as that, which hath the Divinity for its object, he should know so much as he does, rather than that his abilities should enable him not to penetrate farther. The information he possesses, if properly used, under the grace of God, is equal to all the purposes intended, which is "to make him wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus the Lord," (2 Tim. iii. 15.) More than this is unnecessary, and perhaps might prove hurtful. The animal which burrows in the earth, and whose powers of vision are admirably adapted both to the nature of its wants, and to the darkness in which it dwells, might with equal justice complain of the defect of sight, as that man should be querulous with his Maker, because he is not endued with

such faculties as are perfectly unsuitable to his present state, and would defeat the very purposes of his being, and neither conduce to his improvement nor his happiness. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God." And secret they must remain, while the powers of man are incompetent to their discovery. But "those which are revealed," and which include all that we are interested to know, "belong to us and to our children for ever," (Deut. xxix. 29.) In a word, every thing demonstrates that the *present* state is designed to be a state of faith; the *future*, will be a life of fruition. Happy those humble souls, who during their day of trial, are sincerely endeavouring, under divine aid, to answer the great end of their being, in the diligent use of the means of the information afforded them; and waiting with patient hope for the greater manifestations of knowledge, which are promised shortly to open upon them, do yield a cheerful and unfeigned assent to the "acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," (Colos. ii. 2.) They "know whom they have believed," (2 Tim. i. 12,) and "whom having not seen they love," and though now "seeing not, yet believing," they can "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" looking forward to receive the "end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls," (1 Pet. i. 8, 9.)

Though the evidences which have been brought forward in favour of our argument, might be considered sufficient for the satisfaction of all candid and reasonable minds, yet as they are capable of being very considerably strengthened, with similar proofs from the same word of God, it would not be doing justice to our subject if we were wholly to pass them over unnoticed. The personality of the blessed Spirit is plainly implied in various other parts of Scripture, from qualities both of an *active* and *passive* nature ascribed to him. A few examples will set this matter in a clear point of view. Personal identity must be understood in the disposition and ability

of imparting gifts. The apostle Paul, after enumerating a great variety of these of a spiritual nature, adds, "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.) Now if the Holy Ghost be not a person, but merely an emanation of the GODHEAD, what *will* can an emanation be supposed to have for the distribution and division of gifts? And how can they be called *his* gifts? What gifts can an emanation bestow, which is itself in all its operations but given?

Though it does not come within the present object of my plan, to notice in this discourse the proofs of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, yet the passage now under consideration so happily furnishing a testimony to this purport, as well as to his *person*, I ought not to overlook it.

Christ had told his disciples, when forewarning them of the difficulties and oppositions they should necessarily meet with in the course of their ministry, that he would inspire them with sufficient abilities for every conflict. "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist," (Luke xxi. 15.) Hence it follows as an undeniable inference, that such gifts as had an especial relation to the office the apostles exercised in the service of Jesus, according to the various situations in which they were placed, and the divine assistance they required, were dispensed by the immediate donations of our blessed Lord. But the apostle Paul, in the very chapter now under consideration, speaking of spiritual gifts, ascribes the whole, without limitation or reserve, to the bounty of the Father. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," (1 Cor. xii. 6.) And yet in direct reference to the Holy Ghost, within a few verses after, he declares, that "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.)

Upon the conclusion then of the *personal authority* of Christ in the promise he made (which cannot be questioned,) and upon the *personal authority* of the *Father* (which will hardly be doubted,) what shadow of objection can be shewn, that the same application, both of *person* and *authority* (and which must include GODHEAD also,) should be withheld from the Holy Ghost? The same words of distinction are used; the same divine power is ascribed; the same freedom and sovereignty of action are imputed equally to all; and therefore words can have no determinate sense or meaning, unless it be admitted, from this fair comparative view of Scripture with Scripture, that to the sacred Three is here given an equal distinction of person, a participation of power, and the possession of full and absolute GODHEAD. And when the doctrine arising from hence, which is so express in proof of a plurality of persons, in the unity of the Godhead, is added to the many other parts of Scripture to the same effect, which have been already noticed; what can be plainer, than that from the same characters and the same divine operations, being thus clearly ascribed, and without discrimination to the whole Three, there can be no difference or inequality in that inseparable, though to us mysterious union of GODHEAD, in which they eternally exist.

Again, the certainty of person must be implied, in the idea of the Holy Ghost's *doing* such *actions* as are only performable by a Being of conscious identity. Various instances of this kind may be gathered from the word of God. The text describes him under one, which, when explained, will serve as an illustration of others, which might, if needful, be brought forward upon the occasion. The apostle says, "the Spirit speaketh expressly." And though the circumstances, to which the apostle alludes in this passage, no doubt referred to the particular writings of the prophets, which from being penned under the Spirit's inspiration, might properly be

said, to be the *Spirit speaking* by them; yet the expression is warrantable, from the several occasions mentioned in Scripture, in which the blessed Spirit was pleased to make an open and immediate revelation of his will, by the action of *speaking*. We have already reviewed some instances, in which he exercised his ministry, in the early ages of mankind, by a voice; and the New Testament dispensation furnisheth other proofs of the like nature. He expressly spake to the apostle Peter, on the subject of the message from Cornelius. For while the apostle was revolving in his mind the import of the vision, with which he had been favoured on that business, "the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them," (Acts x. 19, 20.) He spake also to Philip the deacon upon much the same occasion, in the instance of the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman. "The Spirit said, Go near, and join thyself to his chariot." And as soon as the commission was fulfilled, to which he had appointed him, it is said, that "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that he saw him no more," (Acts viii. 29, 39.)

Again; We are not only taught, that it is from the express will of the Holy Ghost, that overseers are appointed in the church of Christ; but a very memorable instance occurs in the Scripture history, where he was pleased to make a particular selection from the college of prophets and teachers, at Antioch, for this purpose. While they were engaged in the ministrations with fastings (preparatory as may be supposed to the more immediate service of the Lord,) "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," (Acts xiii. 2.) This is a very striking instance of the agency of the blessed Spirit, and highly demonstrative of his personality; for not only speech and action, but a will and power are contained in it. *He* calls the apostles, appoints them in the mi-

nistry, that ministry is declared to be *his* service, and they, as servants, are said to be dedicated to him. And in further confirmation of it, it is added, that when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them, they departed, *being* sent forth *by the* Holy Ghost, (Acts xiii. 4.)

I cannot forbear observing also, that this argument, like the former, is no less express in the testimony of the *person*, than it is of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost. Our blessed Redeemer, during the season of his ministry in the flesh, observing that the labourers in the spiritual husbandry, from the smallness of their number, bore no proportion to the extensive scene of action which opened to the view on every side, commanded his disciples that they should "pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest," (Luke x. 2.) And here we find the Holy Ghost assuming that very character, and with a supreme and undivided authority, *sending forth* the apostles on this errand. Can it then be the question of a moment, whether he be not "the Lord of the harvest," who acts in this manner? Or can any one imagine, that the exercise of such a prerogative becomes not the fullest decision of the GODHEAD of his person? It would be a matter, I believe, not easily to be refuted, if the certainty both of Person and GODHEAD were contended for on these evidences only: but when the very many and very strong testimonies already noticed, to the same purport, be taken into the account, I persuade myself they form *all together* a body of proofs, impregnable to all opposition.

It still remains to be observed, that the certainty of the Holy Ghost's personality, is not limited to the proofs derived from the *active* properties he possesses; those of a *passive* nature concur in testimony to the same; and both give their separate and distinct evidence to this doctrine.

When the apostle Peter, in his pointed condemnation

of Ananias and Sapphira, for the horrible crime which they had committed, of wilful and deliberate falsehood against the Holy Ghost, charged them with having thereby tempted the "Spirit of the Lord," (Acts v. 9;) could he have done this, but under the idea that the Spirit of the Lord was a person? Had he considered the Holy Ghost to have been no other than an attribute of the GODHEAD, would he have said, how is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the *Omnipresence* or the *Omniscience* of the Lord? Would this have been a proper expression? And yet upon the presumption, that the Holy Ghost is not a person, it might with as much propriety be said of any other attribute, or emanation of God, as of him.*

In like manner, to speak of the sin of *resisting* the Holy Ghost, which Stephen charged the Jews with, must also, upon much the same principles, be equally erroneous, if no more was intended by it, than that they resisted, in a general way, an attribute of God. Whereas the sin is particularly specified to have been the resisting the Holy Ghost. In which the personality of the blessed Spirit must be understood, for on no other ground can the possibility of sinning against *him*† be admitted.

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* This passage of Scripture, it may be remarked, is as pertinent in proof of the GODHEAD, as it is of the Person of the Holy Ghost. Indeed very few are the instances that make for the one doctrine, which do not include the other also. But it would render the subject voluminous indeed to notice all. The present will require nothing more in confirmation of it, than taking a comparative view of two verses in relation; in one of which the crime which *Ananias* committed is said to have been done against the *Holy Ghost*, and in the other it is declared to have been committed against *God*. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?" (Acts v. 3.) And immediately it is added, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The inference is obvious.

† It is a circumstance of no small weight in the argument (and though it may not be adapted as much as others to general apprehension, yet cannot fail of operating with peculiar strength in the breast of the grammarian,) that the sacred writers in several instances, (Rom. xv. 13, 16, 30,) and our blessed Lord himself, in the whole of his conversation with his disciples, when talking of the Holy Ghost, speak of him as *a*

It were easy to extend the subject yet further, by similar observations of this nature, which are to be gathered from Scripture, in which the Holy Ghost is represented under such properties, as can only be explained upon the assurance of his personality. But I have been already much more diffuse than I originally intended, or perhaps you will think to have been necessary. I shall only take notice, therefore, of a single instance more, which though it may not be strictly and altogether of a *passive* nature, yet as it is certainly in proof of the blessed Spirit's personality, it ought not to be overlooked and omitted: the instance, I mean, is that in which the Holy Ghost is represented, both as a witness himself, and appealed to under this character, which can never be understood in any other light than as the property of a self-intelligent and conscious Being.

That he is the first and great witness in the church of Christ, testified at large in those innumerable signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts, which he hath wrought according to *his own will*, at sundry times and in divers manners, is a truth, which is too palpable and obvious, to be called in question. But if it be replied, that these attestations of the blessed Spirit, may be allowed, without admitting his personality; I would beg it may be recollected, that in the very first instance, under the new dispensation, which the Holy Ghost gave of a testimony to Christ, at his entrance on his ministry in his baptism, he assumed the individual form of a

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person in the masculine gender: whereas according to the rules of grammar, and in strict propriety of language, if the Holy Ghost be but an energy, or attribute of God, in all those places, where mention is made of him, the word should have been rendered *it*. In the 16th chapter of St. John, and the 13th and following verses, there is a remarkable example of this kind, and attended with a particularity not less expressive, than any of those which have been alledged, in justification of the argument; where we find πνευμα, though unquestionably of the neuter gender, hath a masculine relative prefixed to it, εκεινος which is altogether inexplicable, but under the idea of the Holy Ghost being a person.

dove; and after our Lord's Ascension the Holy Ghost's first descent, in testimony of the truth of Christ's commission, was in a visible form, on the memorable day of Pentecost: in these two most important events, to which the Holy Ghost as a witness in the church of Christ can minister, we find a visible representation of a personal Being; and it is but a fair conclusion to suppose, that these instances were intended as proofs of his Being and personality,

Add to this, the Apostle Paul declares to the Hebrews, that the Holy Ghost is a witness to the certainty of Christ's sufferings as an offering for sin, (Heb. x. 15.) And the same Apostle, after setting forth some very important points in the Christian scheme of salvation to the Romans, makes an immediate appeal to the blessed Spirit, for the truth of what he had delivered. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. ix. 1.) All which would be words without meaning, if the whole was an appeal to an emanation, or quality of the GODHEAD, and would be perfectly destitute of common sense under this acceptation.*

But I must trespass no longer. I shall therefore not even detain you, with collecting into a general statement, the sum of the several arguments, which have been proposed to your consideration in this and the preceding sermon, in proof of the doctrine which hath been now discussed.

After the many evidences which you have gone through in favour of this truth, I leave it with you to determine, whether it be possible to suppose any thing less, than that an intelligent, conscious person is implied

* In this instance, as in many preceding, we find the most positive proof of GODHEAD as well as personality in the Holy Ghost. Paul's appeal to him, and solemn oath in his name, imply the Divinity of his person. The Apostle was too well informed in the Mosaic law to be ignorant of this. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him," and "shalt swear by his name, (Deut. vi. 13.)

in one, to whom is ascribed both names and properties, all expressive of a personal Being and nature; who is classed in the same order and rank, and denominated by the same terms as the other divine persons of the Godhead, and without the least intimation of any difference or inequality. To whom also, as to the immediate author, are referred those divine operations of the Holy Ghost, which are enumerated in Scripture, and which, to mark them by still more prominent characters, are expressly distinguished, (as far as personal distinction is concerned) from the operations of the Father, by an identical specification of person. If these things can be understood upon any other terms than in reference to the personality of the Holy Ghost, I conceive it might be equally easy to do away the plainest doctrines of Scripture upon the same principles. It is very possible, that in the great variety of testimonies, which are express to this purpose, some may possess greater weight than others; for indeed on no topic of evidence, can all be supposed to be of equal consequence. But it must be the fallacy of the *whole*, and not of any single proposition, or more, that can be deemed sufficient, to refute the certainty of what is here advanced. Allow but only *one* of the proofs to be convincing and unanswerable, and that one is enough for all the purposes intended; in demonstrating that the blessed Spirit is a Being of personal consciousness and identity.

It would be an anticipation of my subject in this place to enter upon the practical improvements, arising out of this very interesting topic. These will more properly follow our subsequent inquiries, relating to the dignity of the Holy Ghost's character. I cannot however dismiss our present review of it, without adding one reflection, which naturally results from what hath been said.

The question of the Holy Ghost's personality, hath not been considered so interesting in the church of Christ,

as it appears to be; nor hath it called forth in general, equal to its consequence, the serious contemplation of even sincere minds. But it certainly is a matter of infinite moment. Admit the evidence of it proved, the belief of it involves in it a train of duties of the highest and most important nature. As an object of faith, it surely is of the first consequence to have proper conceptions of what we believe; and if it be to his personal operation, we owe every divine influence from the laver of regeneration in baptism, to the final consummation in glory; can it be a subject of indifference to entertain a perfect apprehension (as far as our faculties are competent) of a Being to whose divine grace and energy the efficient means of our salvation through Christ are to be ascribed?

To those who are strangers to the operations of the blessed Spirit in the heart, his person, or his GODHEAD, may be alike a matter of uninteresting speculation. But to those who have felt what those operations are, it may be said to them, as Christ said privately to his disciples, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears," (Luke ix. 44.) "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear," (Matt. xiii. 16.) And to all of this description the words of the apostle Paul are particularly addressed: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xv. 13.)

SERMON V.

2 CORINTH. III. 17.

Now the Lord is that Spirit.

EVERY evidence which hath been brought before you in the preceding Sermon, by way of demonstrating the personality of the Holy Ghost, might, with very little extent of argument, have been made to prove his GODHEAD also. For the conviction of the one so necessarily draws after it the assurance of the other, that it is hardly possible to separate the testimony, which equally operates to the confirmation of both. Indeed, in many of the passages of Scripture which were then reviewed, the doctrine appeared to be undeniable, by the fairest implication.

But it was foreign to my intention, by the inductions of any particulars in that discourse, to anticipate in your mind the proof of the Holy Ghost's divinity. The grand object I had then in view, was, to ascertain the certainty of the blessed Spirit's being a *person*. An inquiry into his *nature* and *dignity*, I reserved for the topic of the present discussion, as very justly entitled to a separate and distinct regard. Neither will it, I believe, be thought by any one whose mind is properly impressed with a due reverence for the subject we are upon, that it is possible to be too minute or particular in the investigation of a point of such infinite importance. Notwithstanding, therefore, what hath been already incidentally noticed in the preceding Sermon, in reference to the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, may, in a great measure, have carried with it such proofs of its certainty, as to leave but little doubt, whether a Being to whom are ascribed such

wonderful properties and powers, can be any other than God; yet I could wish, were it possible, that you should bring to the present examination of this great question, a mind perfectly free and unbiassed with the smallest prepossession in favour of the doctrine; that when we have gone over the evidences yet remaining to be considered on this matter, your subscription to it may not be the result of haste and inconsideration, but of the most complete and absolute conviction.

I begin with assuming for a principle, what I hope hath been amply proved in the former discourses, that the Holy Ghost is a conscious, intelligent, personal Being. And the question immediately arising from hence will be, under what character are we to consider him? What rank does he possess in the scale of existence? It hath been shewn, from the testimony of Scripture already brought forward concerning him, that he is not an emanation, an attribute, or energy of the GODHEAD, but one evidently defined by personal properties. And from hence it must follow, that he is either God, possessing, in a distinction of person, an ineffable unity of the divine nature with the Father and the Son; or that he is the creature of God, infinitely removed from him in essence and dignity, and having no other than a derivative excellence in that rank to which he is appointed in creation. There is no medium betwixt the one and the other. Nothing intermediate between the Creator and created can be admissible. So that were the Holy Ghost to be placed at the top of all creation, even as high above the highest angel, as that angel transcends the lowest reptile of animated life, the chasm would be still infinite; and he, who is emphatically called the *Eternal* Spirit, would not be God.

The discussion of this very interesting question is to form the subject of our present meditation. And while I again request your close attention to it, as to a matter of the first consequence to your peace, and as such to

be regarded; I would look up, and with increased earnestness at every step we go, desire we might renew our supplications, for the continual aids of that "wisdom which is from above," and which can alone enable us to prosecute our path with a certain assurance of success. The soul, like the body, requires a constant supply of nourishment and support. The sustenance derived from yesterday's *manna*, cannot be sufficient, neither was it intended for the preservation of the present moment: it rather becomes an indication of continual necessity. And if we wish to keep the soul alive, with all her faculties in full vigour, our wants will compel us to go forth every day, and seek the renewed food from heaven. As soon as the "morning dew is gone up from the host," we shall gather the *omer*, with humble waitings upon the bountiful Giver. While preserving this unremitted dependence upon him, every necessity will be supplied, and having "nourishment ministered and knit together we shall increase with the increase of God," (Coloss. ii. 19.) Our "day of small things," will be made a day of usefulness in the spiritual building of the faith; and divine strength being perfected in human weakness, the "headstone will be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it," (Zech. iv. 7.)

It may very safely be admitted, as a maxim perfectly incontrovertible, being supported both by reason and the nature of things, and also by the authority of Scripture; that as all the knowledge we can have of the being and perfections of the GODHEAD, must be derived from the revelations, which he has been pleased to make of himself, and from whence alone we can infer the certainty of his divinity; so, when we are taught, from the same unerring source of truth, that the Holy Ghost is distinguished by *names*, and *attributes*, accompanied with such a plenitude of underived power, and manifested in a train of *operations*, transcending all finite ability, and such as can belong to none but God; there can be no reason for

hesitation, in the one case, more than in the other: however mysterious and inexplicable the existence of a distinction of persons in the essence of Godhead may be, the conclusion is unavoidable. He, of whom such things are said, is, and must be God; or, to use the words of the text, "the Lord is that Spirit."

Whether such are revealed to us in Scripture of the Holy Ghost, as will necessarily lead to this conclusion, is the grand point to be determined. And this I shall have no manner of doubt of being able to prove, and let me add, of obtaining your unreserved belief to the truth of the doctrine involved in it; when under the divine aid, you shall have fully examined the testimonies now to be proposed to your consideration.

The first class of evidences, in proof of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, to which I would wish to direct your attention, shall be the *names* and *titles* by which he is known in Scripture, and which can be received under no other acceptation, than that a Being, so eminently distinguished, is God.

Of these we find, that there are *some*, by which the blessed Spirit is *peculiarly* known, and *others*, which, by implication, he possesses in *common* with the Father and the Son, in the undivided essence of GODHEAD. Indeed, strictly speaking, though in the wonderful scheme of human redemption, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are revealed to us, under distinct names and characters, by which we are taught to ascribe certain operations to one, more immediately than to another; yet the agency of each is not to be considered as so detached, but that the whole co-operate and concur. And hence it is, most probably, that among the specific and peculiar appellations by which the blessed Spirit is distinguished, and which imply his sovereignty and power, we find that he is also called, "the Spirit of the Father," (John xv. 26,) and "the Spirit of the Son," (Gal. iv. 6;) because, acting in conjunction with the Father, and the Son, the opera-

tions of the one are in effect the operations of the other, and altogether result from the indivisible essence of the Godhead. It is the grandeur, it is the infinity of the subject, which necessarily precludes our having clearer conceptions of this distinction of person, subsisting in an unity of nature. But though we cannot find terms sufficiently expressive, to convey adequate ideas of this mysterious existence; nor indeed can even the imagination conceive a perfect apprehension of it in the mind; yet the certainty of it is abundantly confirmed through every part of Scripture. For, while the fundamental doctrine of all religion is founded in the unity of the divine essence, and it is plain, both from the nature of things and the whole tenour of revelation, that there is, there can be but one God; it is as evident from the same unquestionable authority, that God exists in a plurality of persons.

Among the *names* and *titles*, by which the Holy Ghost is known in Scripture, that of the *Eternal Spirit* is his *peculiar* appellation. A name, which in the very first face of things accurately defines his nature, and carries with it the most convincing proof of GODHEAD. None but "the High and Holy One, which inhabiteth eternity," can be called *eternal*. Of other beings, who possess a derivative immortality, it may be said, that as they are created for eternity, they may enjoy, through the benignity of their Creator, a future eternal duration. But this differs as widely as the east is from the west, when applied to him of whom we are speaking. He alone, who possesses an underived, independent, and necessary self-existence, "who was, and is, and is to come," can be said, in exclusion of all other beings, to be eternal. "He only hath immortality." There is no epithet, perhaps, altogether so determinate in proof of GODHEAD as this. To none but Jehovah himself can it be applied. No creature, however high or exalted, can be distinguished by such a character. Let his exist-

ence be traced back to millions of ages, yet there was a period when every created being began to be. But He, who is emphatically called the *Eternal Spirit*, is "from everlasting to everlasting." And as this is one of the incommunicable properties of GODHEAD, so consequently he, of whom it is spoken, must be God.*

* The eternity of the Holy Ghost, considered as forming a permanent security for the accomplishment of all those gracious acts, included in his divine ministry in the hearts of believers, affords so many delightful reflections for spiritual improvement, and becomes so highly gratifying in the review, that I hope to be forgiven, if I add a few thoughts in this way concerning it.

It is impossible, I think, to contemplate the Holy Ghost, under this attribute abstractedly considered, without being awakened into the most profound reverence, in the idea of his infinity. To conceive of him, as a being possessing an eternal, underived existence, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," but remaining unchangeably the same, from everlasting to everlasting; what a subject is this for the human mind to enter upon! Infinite on all sides, above and below, and every where around, the imagination is lost in the immensity of the idea. It is like launching into an illimitable ocean, without finding the possibility of either shore or bottom!

And the awfulness induced in the soul by this awakening meditation, is but the more increased, when from considering the Eternal Spirit abstractedly as he is in himself, we regard him as he appears in relation to our nature. In the transition, which seems unavoidable, from the contemplation of a being so infinitely great, to the review of a creature so infinitely humble as man; no terms are competent to express the difference. The one, "without variableness or shadow of turning; the same yesterday, to day, and for ever:" the other, whose existence, for the transiency of its duration, and the frailty of its texture, is compared, in the nervous language of Scripture, to the "shadow that departeth;" and to the strength, which is "crushed" even "before the moth." He, who hath the most lively apprehension of the extreme pertinency of these figures, will best feel the force of the Psalmist's observations: "Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou regardest him?"

But when we proceed yet further in the contemplation, and consider this Eternal Spirit, in the divine operations carried on by his immediate agency; that a Being, whom "the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain," should yet graciously condescend to visit creatures of the earth; nay, more than this, not only visit, but dwell with them; and though of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," should even take the human heart "for his temple;" and from the sinful mass of men, be gathering to himself a "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish:" here the mind of man is overpowered in the contemplation, and unable

In like manner we trace similar proofs of the GODHEAD of the blessed Spirit, from the name and character

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to find any terms of expression corresponding to the ideas awakened; he can only exclaim in the same words of admiration as the apostle, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!"

It is in this most endearing of all considerations, that the eternity of the blessed Spirit becomes so delightful and consolatory in the reflection, to the soul of man. Infinite greatness thus beheld, through the medium of infinite goodness, excites an animation, and encourages, at the time it impresses with reverence. It is from this glorious attribute that we derive assurance, both of the immutability in which all the dispensations of grace are founded, and of the security the faithful possess, for the performance of all the divine promises. In the eternity of the nature of the blessed Spirit, efficacy is imparted to all the works he is carrying on, in the economy of human redemption: and because he is unchangeable, believers are secured in their dependence upon him, that the dispensations of his grace are unchangeable also. How encouraging, in this view of things, is the eternal character of Him, to whose ministry the great Saviour of the world hath reserved the efficient means of finishing his salvation! If the first manifestations of grace originated in human merit; or if the continuance of its operations depended upon human merit, what desponding moments might it not at times occasion in the breast of the most faithful believer! But when we recollect the Being, whose peculiar province it is to begin, carry on, and complete the great work of regeneration, by whom the merits of the Redeemer are applied and made effectual to the pardon of sin, and the renewing of the mind in the believer; as these acts plainly intimate the Omnipotency of him by whom they are accomplished; so do they afford, at the same time, the most incontestible proofs to the faithful, that his purposes concerning them are fixed and immutable. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, in every operation. He hath the *key* of David; "He openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." Look into thy heart, O Christian, for the testimonies of his divine agency. Examine, and re-examine, for that "anointing of the Holy One," by those infallible marks which cannot be mistaken. The *inward* witness, like the *burning bush* before the astonished prophet, may convince you of the holy ground on which you stand; and "he who hath begun the good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ." Oh! the happiness of that soul, who in the midst of this dreaming world, "hath received his testimony, and hath set to his seal that God is true." How immediately applicable to all such are the words of promise. "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," (Isaiah xliii. 1, 2.) And may we not add, even in the swellings of *Jordan*, when going down to the

by which he is *peculiarly* known, when he is called the *Holy Ghost*, or *Holy Spirit*. For while we read in Scripture, that "there is none holy but the Lord, for there is none beside him:" and every part of the sacred volume concurs in assuring us, that holiness is one of the peculiar attributes of the Godhead, and such as, from its nature, must be altogether inapplicable to every other being; (because the perfection of every created being is derivative, and consequently not his own;) as then we find, that the blessed Spirit is constantly distinguished by this name, and revealed to us under this character; what possible prevention can arise to keep back our belief of his GODHEAD, to whom such an attribute of GODHEAD is applied? And when we discover, moreover, that the appellation is not merely titular, a barren name proceeding from no cause, and unaccompanied with any effect, but followed with all the proofs of a divine being, in full possession of divine power; that this Holy Spirit imparts holiness to believers; convinces them of sin; sanctifies their nature; helps their infirmities; when they are under error, is the "Spirit of truth to guide them into all truth;" when they are under trouble, becomes to them "the Holy Ghost the Comforter:" and as in this life he is the great cause of regenerating their nature from sin to holiness, by which they are "sealed unto the day of redemption:" so in another, he will be the Almighty agent, to "quicken their mortal bodies," when that which is sown in grace, shall be reaped in glory: who can possibly believe that all these divine acts of the Holy and Eternal Spirit, can be performed by any but the Holy and Eternal God? It must be prejudice in the extreme, to admit the one, and yet

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way, which all must pass, the same Eternal Spirit, who, unseen, hath accompanied all along the journey, will then rest upon thee as upon *Elijah's mantle*, dividing the waters of death, "hither and thither;" and thou shalt go over to the promised land, as on dry ground, "in the path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen," (Job xxviii. 7.)

deny the other. And upon the presumption that the fact be, as it is stated, the conclusion, in the favour of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, will be unavoidable.*

* In every point of view in which we contemplate the perfections of the blessed Spirit, we find subjects continually opening upon us to engage our attention, and to awaken us to some more peculiar duty, corresponding to the particular attribute we behold in his character. In the divine property of his holiness, the most persuasive of all arguments is found, to recommend holiness to the Lord's people, and to induce in them an imitation, as far as the frailty of nature will admit, of the perfection they adore. And though, no doubt, the vast dissimilarity in the human character to the divine, precludes the possibility of any near approach in the resemblance; yet there will be at least some faint traces to manifest the affinity in the members to their spiritual head. Holiness in man indeed is and must be altogether derivative. It is like the light of the moon, all borrowed. For as her opaque body is incapable in herself of emitting any rays of light, but the whole of her lustre is entirely the effect of a reflected shining; so the Christian possesses no inherent quality of brightness in himself, but all must first be received before it can be imparted. But as that faithful luminary of the night, from the communion she holds with the sovereign planet of the day, manifests the influence by which she is governed, and shines beautiful amidst the gloom of the hemisphere; so all true believers, on whom the sun of righteousness hath shed his beams of glory, will indicate the source from whence they derive their lustre, in the midst of a dark and degenerate age, "among whom they shine as lights in the world."

Among the evidences by which the truth of a real religious character can be ascertained, there is none so decisive as that which is drawn from those principles of holiness, wrought in the soul by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. As this becomes a very interesting point, and such as no Christian ought to be ignorant of, I would beg the indulgence of stating it somewhat more particularly. And I am the more prompted to it from a conviction of its necessity. I fear we do not attend to this distinguishing feature, in the character of a Christian, in the manner we ought, and suitably to its importance. There is an orthodoxy of the head (if I may so call it) which reaches not to the heart. Professors, who are seeking an easier path to their Lord's kingdom, than either the Master or his faithful disciples trod, rest satisfied in possession of the *former*, without being solicitous for the *latter*. And hence it is, that while the *humble believer*, because he does not find a perfect conformity to the holy pattern, in an absolute freedom from *all* sin, is cast down with distressing apprehensions, and led to judge unfavourably of himself, as though he possessed no evidence of any change having been wrought in his heart by the power of the Holy Ghost: there are *others*, who satisfy their minds with slight views of duty, and from professing an *outward* testimony in favour of the principles of the gospel, are not so attentive as they ought, to the acquiring the *inward* effects. For the information of both these very different characters;

I might go on in support of my present argument, to the examination of all the other *names* and *titles* by

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with a view to quiet the needless apprehension of the one, and to awaken the concern of the other to a more serious regard, in the proper discrimination of duty; I would humbly beg to propose the following considerations.

Though holiness is not among the efficient means of man's salvation; "being justified freely (as the apostle observes) by the grace which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" yet is it an indispensable evidence of the new and spiritual life. For as by holiness we best manifest the reality of our religion, and afford the most convincing proof that we are "passed from death unto life;" so is it an express precept, that "as he who hath called us is holy, so must we be holy in all manner of conversation." And it is an awful declaration, never to be forgotten, to which reason, as well as Scripture subscribes the fullest and most deliberate approbation, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

This principle then, which, like all other graces, is the gift of God, is shed abroad in the heart of every true believer, by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. By nature we have it not. Every part of the divine word abounds with descriptions of the corruption of man, as born into this world, and the change which is wrought upon him by the Holy Spirit of the Lord: and these are all so many traits of character, and drawn with the nicest accuracy, to distinguish between a state of nature and a state of grace. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil. If we say that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." No terms can more clearly discriminate the different characters of sin and holiness. A volume written upon the subject might, indeed, illustrate the matter more fully, but it could not mark with greater precision the prominent features belonging to each. Hence it becomes no difficult point for any man to ascertain to which class he belongs. And he that is sincerely desirous of gaining information in a matter which of all others infinitely concerns him, has only to propose to himself those serious questions by which it shall be known. Ask yourself what is the predominant principle of your heart? If sin and holiness are qualities which can never coalesce, or bear equal sway in the same breast, seriously examine which has the empire in *your* affections? The point may easily be known by a discovery of the leading passions of the mind; whether God or the world, the Spirit or the flesh, this life or the next, mostly occupy the regard. Whether you are busily engaged by any of the various schemes of worldly-minded men, "to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;" or whether you are seeking grace from heaven, to abstract yourself more and more from things of sense, and "in dying daily to the world," are endeavouring "to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts?" Questions of this and the like nature, seriously applied to the heart in

which the Holy Ghost is known in Scripture; for they all, more or less, minister to the same great truth. Not

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some secret and retired hour, could not fail, under divine help, to let any man into the knowledge of himself and his real character. And though I do not say, that the most exalted Christian would find in the examination of himself, the evidences of a nature so renewed as to be totally free from all sin (alas! this is impossible;) yet, I am confident, the least advanced in grace might be enabled by the inquiry, to discover the ruling principle of his conduct. For where a life of true religion is begun in the soul, there will be ever a constant and earnest endeavour accompanying it, of "cleansing the heart from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

While these few hints may serve to convince the most orthodox professor, whose religion is of the head, and not of the heart, that something more is essential to salvation, than mere speculative notions, floating on the understanding without descending into the life; I hope they will be found also not without their use, for the information and comfort of those humble souls, whose want of experiencing a total exemption from the corruptions of nature, tempts them to suspect the reality of their conversion towards God. With all possible tenderness, I would desire such to consider, whether their very apprehensions when properly examined, do not become the truest test of their religious sincerity? Surely the conflicts you maintain, in your endeavours after holiness, are the fullest proofs that a spirit of grace operates in the heart. There is no hostility in a life of sense. None of these struggles which you complain of are discoverable in men of the world. It is only "after the kindness and love of God our Saviour hath appeared," that the holy warfare commences. Then, indeed, "the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit." And never will the battle be over, until life itself is ended, and the angel of death hath sounded a retreat. When the body drops into the grave, all its imperfections and frailties will drop together with it. And when the day of the Lord shall come, and He, who is "the resurrection and the life," shall appear, then that which was sown a "natural body," shall be raised a "spiritual body," and he will change it, "according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Think it not strange," therefore, "concerning this fiery trial," which now tries you, "as though some strange thing happeneth unto you." The corruptions of which *you* complain, have been the complaint of thousands. It was the same under which holy Paul and his companions groaned, when they had "the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." And if the consciousness of unallowed transgressions in you shall but induce the same effect, one gracious purpose of infinite wisdom, in the permission of evil, will be answered by it. He is pleased sometimes to suffer his best servants to be made sensible of their frailty, in order to enforce the closer dependence upon divine aid. Had it corresponded with his gracious designs, there can be no question but that the same power,

a single appellation is given to the blessed Spirit, but what carries with it some more peculiar and additional evidence of the GODHEAD of his person. But a minute discussion of every instance which might be produced of this kind, would in a great measure impede my course in pursuit of the object I have in view. Those which I have mentioned are sufficient to exemplify the certainty of the doctrine itself, and to prove that the Being, who is distinguished by such names, and of whom such things are said, cannot but be God.

Indeed, as a single character of GODHEAD could not be applied to the Holy Ghost, but under the fullest assurance of his divine nature; had there not been some more immediate object in view, than merely to have conveyed to the mind the knowledge of his divinity; one name, which clearly and unequivocally implied or expressed it, would have answered every purpose. But from the various and relative terms under which the blessed Spirit is revealed in Scripture, it should seem to have been the divine intention not only to have designed

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which is first exerted to awaken the sinner to a new and spiritual life, could have totally destroyed the whole body of sin, and the new man might have arisen from the old, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;" but how then would "the trial of your faith have been more precious than gold which perisheth?" Go then, my brother, while justly mourning over a nature so deeply tainted with evil, as to require continued humiliation for sin before God, and the continued application of that "blood of cleansing" to the conscience, "which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel;" go, and take with thee those comforts which are the peculiar privilege of every true believer in Christ. Let every renewed instance of frailty lead thy soul in humbleness still nearer unto God. And while daily endeavouring "to perfect holiness in the fear of God," console thyself with the prospect of that happy hour, when all those enemies which now harass and afflict thee (like the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore before the Israelities,) thou shalt see no more again for ever. Standing upon the eternal ground, and looking back upon all the proceedings of this life, with a different eye from that with which thou now beholdest them, thou wilt discover the numberless instances in which divine strength hath been perfected in human weakness; and the song of *Moses* and the *Lamb* will be the involuntary effusion of every heart; "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"

his several titles as so many proofs of GODHEAD, but also that they might become subjects of comfort, in those intimate relations (if I may presume to call them by that name) in which the Holy Ghost is said to stand to believers. And under this idea indeed we shall find, that every name given to the blessed Spirit is of peculiar significance, and conveys to us, in the most pleasing and familiar manner, the several graces and operations he is carrying on in the human mind.

When (for example) he is called the "Spirit of truth;" as this immutable principle, emblematically considered, can only be applied to an immutable being, and none but God himself can be distinguished by such an attribute; it becomes the plainest proof in the world, that he who is revealed under this appellation must be God. And the acts included in this character do as fully certify his possession of divine properties, to qualify for the discharge of them. As the "Spirit of truth," he is "to guide into all truth;" to "take of the things of Christ and of the Father, and to shew them to the disciples; to glorify Christ," and the like: the performance of these several operations, it is evident, must have depended upon the GODHEAD of his person. For there would be a palpable absurdity in supposing that any thing finite could accomplish infinite purposes. And to take of an *infinite* Being, to display his actions *infinitely*, to glorify him *infinitely*, and in short to produce such effects, *ad infinitum*, and all the while, by the exercise of finite properties, would be the most chimerical notion ever adopted.

But though these circumstances become so many decisive proofs of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, this was not all the information I venture to suppose intended to be conveyed concerning him, by this character of the "Spirit of truth." It was meant also, no doubt, to indicate that he would be an infallible Teacher and Guide to his people, when, according to the pro-

phet, "he led the blind by a way that they knew not, and into paths which they had not known," (Isa. xlii. 16.) Amidst the various deviations from the truth, into which the minds of men in all ages are tempted to wander, it was designed as a matter of peculiar comfort to the believer, that *his* teacher should be the blessed Spirit of truth, whose grace it was to guide into all truth. So that under that anointing of the Holy One, he would know all things; be secured from the possibility of error, and the *hidden life* of the Christian be preserved in the soul.

In like manner, as to the title of the *Comforter*, which he is expressly denominated by Christ himself; in what a variety of interesting particulars are we enabled to contemplate the Holy Ghost, under this tender appellation, added to the positive proof it affords of the divinity of his character! While we derive from it the fullest conviction, that nothing less than God himself can be the true comforter of man, in all the various situations in which he may be placed; that none but He, who is Omniscient to know, Omnipotent to protect, and Eternal to abide with him for ever, can be competent to relieve all his wants and necessities, both here and hereafter; and while such views bring home to the heart the most satisfying assurances of the GODHEAD of his person, by whom such operations are wrought; it is incredible to suppose, but that Christ represented the Holy Ghost as the Paraclete of his people, for other purposes besides that of testifying his divinity. Was it not the intention also of our ever compassionate Redeemer, in proposing the blessed Spirit to our hearts, under this most endearing character, that the remembrance of it might always prompt the mind under any of its tribulations, to have recourse to his gracious aids? He knew full well the numberless situations of evil, through which the faithful must pass. And he knew also how apt we are, upon any of those

occasions, to lean for help on objects which cannot but deceive. In revealing therefore the blessed Spirit under this amiable attribute of the Comforter, which contains in its comprehension of expression all that is recommendable to the heart; surely he meant to say, that though all lesser consolations should fail, yet in Him the faithful would find "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," (2 Thess. ii. 16.) And who, that knows the little value of all human comforts, can need any thing more to convince him of the infinite blessing of having somewhat beyond them? For how pleasant soever our earthly enjoyments may for the moment appear, they afford only a temporary relief. They are so transient, often deceitful, and generally unsatisfactory. Like the gourd of Jonah, "they come up in a night and die before the morning." And how frequently in the very moment, while tasting of their sweets, is our situation rendered similar to the prophet's at the brook; the spring of supply is dried up, and a new place must be sought for. And hence no doubt it is, that all the consolations of the *creature* are so generally forbidden, or, if allowed, prove empty and unsatisfying, on purpose to lead the heart to the great Creator. For while we keep near to this fountain-head of every comfort, however the current of other sources may fail, the refreshments which flow from hence will be perennial.

The process is indeed remarkable, which may be observed in the dispensations of the present life, whereby the Lord is training the faithful for glory. The situation and the trials of every one seem to be so admirably adjusted, as if that individual alone occupied the whole of the divine regard. The cup, which is given to each disciple, is precisely what it is, because none else would answer the purposes intended for probation. But he that has appointed it, knows the exact proportion of the mingled potion it contains, and does not suffer the "drop too much" to be poured in. Oh! did men of

the world, or did even true believers, but accustom themselves to consider more attentively than they do, the hand which graciously administers it; they would see enough to convince them, that every draught, how unpleasant soever it may seem, is of a salutary nature, and becomes of medicinal virtue, under the divine blessing. And the instances, I believe, are not a few, in every man's life, where the very cup, our wayward humour would willingly have dashed to the ground (but in which mistaken desire the mind has not been gratified,) has been found in the end that which was most to be coveted: divine mercy has converted its nauseous contents into effects which are pleasant and desirable, and made it the reverse of what is related of the *Angel's book*, though "bitter to the taste," yet in the stomach "sweet as honey."

But I must pursue these reflections no further. My province at present is with the evidences of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost. I pass on therefore to the testimonies yet remaining to be considered on this subject.

Though the testimonies, from the several names by which the Holy Ghost is *peculiarly* known in Scripture, and the epithets which are prefixed to them, are inexplicable; but on the supposition of his divine nature, I cannot but think they are completely satisfactory, in proof of the GODHEAD of his person; yet it will certainly tend to the greater stability of our faith in this important article of religion, if we add to them some more *general* titles which he possesses, in common with the other sacred persons of the Godhead. The limits I am obliged to observe in a work of this kind compel me to be as brief as possible in bringing the evidences into the closest comprehension of argument, that they may be just sufficient, and no more, in support of the object in view.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark to you, that the appellation of JEHOVAH, by which the Almighty is

known in his holy word, is, of all others, a term expressing (as far as language can express) an infinite, necessarily independent, and self-existing Being. A name that is perfectly incommunicable to all creatures, and can be applied to none indeed, but to the One Supreme. If therefore it can be shewn, that this sacred and incommunicable name is either directly, or by way of implication, made use of, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, the evident inference must be that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah. A few quotations from Scripture will be sufficient to this purpose.

In the book of Deuteronomy, the inspired writer speaking of the traversing of Israel through the wilderness, observes, that *Jehovah* alone "did lead him, and there was no strange God with him."* But the prophet Isaiah, in explaining this passage of the Jewish history, expressly says, that it was the *Holy Spirit* that "led them by the right hand with his glorious arm."† A positive proof that the Holy Spirit is Jehovah.

Again; At the waters of Massah and Meribah, the people tempted Jehovah because of their thirst. But the inspired writer to the Hebrews applies all this to the Holy Ghost.‡

Once more. The Evangelist St. Luke says, that "it was the Lord God of Israel which spake by the mouth of the holy prophets which have been since the world began," (Luke i. 68.) Whereas the apostle Paul declares, that it was the *Holy Ghost* who spake by Esaias the prophet, (Acts xxviii. 25.) And to the same purport corresponds the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, compared with St. Paul. "The Lord (Jehovah) said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed but understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not." The apostle, in quoting this passage, expressly declares that it was

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* Compare Deut. xxxii. 12, with Isaiah lxiii. 10, *et seq.*

† Ibid.

‡ Compare Exod. xvii. 2, with Heb. iii. 7, 8, 9.

the Holy Ghost. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, unto our Father, saying, Go unto this people and say," &c.*

And still more, in confirmation that the Holy Ghost is the Jehovah here spoken of, it is said in the book of Numbers, "If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision," (Numb. xii. 6.) But St. Peter refers all the gifts of prophecy unto the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. "Prophecy (says he) came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. i. 21.) This concurrence of testimony will be thought, I hope, decisive in proof, that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah.

The same doctrine is as clearly implied in those Scriptures, where the *provoking* Jehovah, and *tempting* the Most High God, in one part, is explained in another, in immediate reference to the Holy Spirit.† The sin itself indeed evidently indicates the GODHEAD of the Being, against whom only it can be committed. Hence, when Moses warned the Israelites against the commission of it, he said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," (Jehovah Alehim.) But in that memorable instance of the apostle Peter's punishing Ananias and Sapphira, for this very crime, he charged them with tempting "the Spirit of the Lord." And what is further remarkable in this transaction, and which indeed becomes convincing in our present argument, is, that the Being, which in one verse is called the Holy Ghost (το πνευμα το ἅγιον,) in the very next following, is said to be God, (τω Θεω.‡)

More texts of Scripture, to the same purport, might be adduced. But these, I hope, will be thought sufficient in proof, that the incommunicable name of Je-

* Compare Isaiah vi. 9, with Acts xxviii. 25.

† Compare Numb. xiv. 11, with Psalm lxxviii. 56, and Isaiah lxiii. 10.

‡ Compare Deut vi. 16, with Acts v. 3, 4.

hovah is given to the Holy Ghost; and being thus given, it is impossible that any other conclusion can result from it, but the one which the Psalmist hath made; that "He, whose name is Jehovah, is only the most High over all the earth," (Psalm lxxxiii. 18.)

As the appellation Jehovah or (LORD) implies one necessarily self-existing Being, and is the incommunicable name of Deity; so that of Alehim, or God, is but another distinction of the same character; and, like the former, is frequently used in reference to the Holy Ghost.* This will appear by a comparison of parallel texts of Scripture.

It is said of God, in the Old Testament (accommodating the expressions used to the language and apprehension of men,) that He would come and dwell in them. "I will set my tabernacle among you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye

* It is a point of the greatest consequence, in considering the peculiar significance of each name, to remark that Jehovah is *singular*; thereby denoting the unity of the divine essence: and Alehim is *plural*, which as evidently implies a plurality of persons in the Godhead; and by being joined with a verb singular, as it is in the first line of the Holy book, ברא אלהים as well as in many other parts of it, which would be inadmissible, according to all the rules of grammar, but under this idea it clearly intimates the mysterious plurality of the divine essence. The learned Mr. Parkhurst, in his Lexicon, hath been at the pains of marking the various passages, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, where the אלהים when meaning the true God Jehovah, is joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs plural, and which amount to near *thirty* in number. Indeed the very phrase used by Moses, and quoted by Christ himself, when speaking of the unity of the Supreme Being, carries with it an indirect proof of this doctrine. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah." Which (as a writer very pertinently observes) leads us to seek for a plural interpretation, because surely there could need no revelation to teach us that *one is one*, which if the text meant nothing more, would have been a superfluous information. It were to be wished (as Mr. Parkhurst justly expresses it) that those who have any doubts upon this grand subject, in the present day of blasphemy, would attentively consider these things, and particularly, that "the children of Abraham, according to the flesh," would examine the several texts, which are to this amount in *their own Scriptures*; they would be led to own, perhaps, through divine assistance, that they expressly teach a plurality of Alehim in Jehovah.

shall be my people," (Levit. xxvi. 11, 12.) In illustrating which passage, the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, in one part explains the terms made use of, in allusion to the Father, and in another, to the Holy Ghost. "Ye are the temple (says he) of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (2 Cor. vi. 16.) Here the passage is quoted *totidem verbis*, and explained in reference to the Father. In another place, the apostle makes express application of it to the Holy Ghost. He considers it, indeed, as a matter so well understood, and so generally known, that he questions with a kind of surprise, as if the disbelief of it was impossible. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. vi. 19.) And that no possible misapprehension might remain, the identity of person is still more emphatically marked, in much the same question, in a preceding chapter: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) If then it was God himself that promised of old to come unto his people and make them his temple; and yet, the bodies of believers are expressly said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; must it not follow, by an undeniable conclusion, that the Holy Ghost is God? The terms applied to both are the same. They are synonymous, and can be interpreted in no other way. And let any man explain, if he can, the possibility of an indwelling Being, but under the assurance that he is an indwelling GOD? Surely, the very idea of a temple presupposes the GODHEAD of Him to whom it is dedicated; and his residence in it is impossible, but under the certainty of his possessing divine properties. So very clear and decisive therefore are those texts of Scripture, when comparative views are taken of them, in proof of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost; nor, indeed, can they

be reconcileable, upon any other terms, with the principles even of common sense.

The same doctrine may be deduced from various other passages of holy writ, by the fairest and plainest arguments.

The apostle Paul tells the Philippians, that it is "God which worketh in them, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure," (Philip. ii. 13.) Whereas in his other epistles, he generally ascribes the operations on the minds of men to the agency of the blessed Spirit. Speaking of spiritual gifts, he tells the Corinthians, that his operations are universal: "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.) But that the GODHEAD of this Almighty Being, who distributes his gifts according to the purposes of his will, may not be overlooked or forgotten, he tells them in the same chapter, that "it is the same God which worketh all in all," (1 Cor. xii. 6.)

Again; the act of sealing the Lord's people is ascribed by the apostle Paul, to the operation of the Father, (2 Cor. i. 22.) And yet, the same inspired writer, in another of his epistles, tells the Ephesians, that "they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," (Ephes. i. 13.) And "by him they were also sealed unto the day of redemption," (Ephes. iv. 30.) The inference is obvious.*

In that sublime hymn of praise, in which the Psalmist extols the attributes of GODHEAD, what he says in one

* As the author writes more for the information of the uninformed, than to gratify the curiosity of the learned, or to add to the stock of human knowledge; he makes no apology to the Logician and the Scholar for adapting his arguments, in a way that may be more plain and convincing, than in the abstruse manner of the schools. At the same time he desires it may be observed, that such as choose to examine his *enthymemes* by that standard, may, if they please, reduce them into the form of syllogisms, in which their deductions will be found equally conclusive.

verse, by way of absolute distinction of God the Father, n another, and in the very same application of cha- acter, is referred to the Holy Ghost. "O Lord, thou hast searched me out and known me, thou compasseth ny path, and art acquainted with all my ways." Im- nediately after this he adds, "Whither shall I go from hy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence," Psalm cxxxix. 1, 2.)

To the same amount is the testimony of the beloved apostle St. John. The very operation on the human nind, which in his first epistle is imputed to the Father, s in his gospel ascribed to the Holy Ghost.* But it would be superfluous to multiply quotations, for the purpose of establishing the proofs of a doctrine so gene- ally attested by all the arguments of this kind, which have been now produced. If it can any way be sup- posed, in the instances which I have mentioned, that the name of the incommunicable Jehovah, and the dis- tinguishing appellation of God, be clearly and unequi- vocally applied to the person of the Holy Ghost; we have at once a full and absolute demonstration of his GODHEAD. For it would be the grossest perversion of language to suppose, that such terms of distinction should be given to him, unconnected with his possession of their relative properties.

Before I dismiss this branch of evidences in proof of the Holy Ghost's divine nature, I have to request that your recollection may be refreshed with the testimonies we examined in the preceding discourses, respecting his *personality*. They are peculiarly necessary to be consi- dered at this time; and, indeed, I would wish that they may be never lost sight of through every part of our sub- ject. The certainty of his person places him in some rank in the scale of Being. Admitting this, if it be not allowed at the same time that He is one with the Father and the Son, in the indivisible essence of GODHEAD,

* Compare John iii. 6, with John v. 4.

the application of the name of Jehovah to him would be the exalting a creature unto a level with the infinite Creator, and involving in its consequences the grossest idolatry. And upon the presumption that he is an Eternal Being, to whom the name of Jehovah is justly applied, and yet, that he is not one with the Father and the Son, this would be polytheism indeed! making two or more first causes, overturning the whole fabric of religion, and introducing anarchy and disorder among all its principles. How gratifying then is it to the true believer, when he traces through every part of Scripture this beautiful analogy of one and the same name, which distinguishes GODHEAD, indiscriminately applied to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Spirit. For such an equal participation of name and character can only be the effect of an equal participation of all the properties of the Godhead. And however mysterious to beings of the limited faculties we possess, such apprehensions of the divine existence may be, the fact is undeniable. Every part of Scripture concurs to stamp the certainty of this great doctrine, that in the undivided essence of GODHEAD, there is a distinction of person; and yet this distinction of person, by an incomprehensible unity of nature, constitutes, at the same time, but the one true God.

The second class of evidences, in proof of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, may be taken from his possession of the *divine attributes.* Distinction of character can only be justly ascertained by specific properties. As we infer therefore the quality of a man from the powers and faculties he possesses, so, by a parity of reasoning, the perfections of GODHEAD, which are conspicuous in the Holy Ghost, do as plainly determine the divinity of his nature.

The testimonies of this kind, under which the Holy Ghost is represented in Scripture, are so numerous, that I am only at a loss to make such a selection from them

as shall be sufficient to our purpose, and yet give variety to our subject, by avoiding a sameness of argument. I think it therefore unnecessary to dwell upon those illustrious attributes of his *Eternity* and *Holiness;* for they were indirectly reviewed (being included in the *names* and *titles* taken notice of) in the former part of this discourse. His possession of those distinguishing properties of Godhead, will hardly be questioned by any one who will seriously attend to what was then said respecting him. And the clear and indisputable right to such distinctions of character, which for ever separates him from the most distant comparison with any of his creatures, must be the most decisive evidence of the GODHEAD of his person.

Ubiquity is another eminent property of the Godhead. It necessarily includes infinity, and is indeed joined with it. For as the infinite nature of God denies any limits to its existence, so the ubiquity of God admits of no bounds to his essence. Our faculties, it must be confessed, are not commensurate to the apprehension of either; but the conviction of the one, arising from the evidences with which it is attested, draws after it the certainty of the other, and, however inconceivable to us, establishes both. But reason is thus far able to follow revelation, in her testimony of these unquestionable truths, as to apprehend the possibility of an infinite Being filling infinite space. But what a contemplation, indeed, does the idea of any part of the divine character open to our minds! my business, however, is not so much to discourse upon the perfection itself, as to shew that the Holy Ghost possesses it. And this may be done from a single evidence (passing by others which might, if needful, be produced upon the occasion,) because it is one of the plainest and best suited for popular apprehension. Jesus, when animating the minds of his disciples with the promise of another Comforter, among other traits in his character, gave them this, that he

should "abide with them for ever;" which is, at once, the fullest assurance of his ubiquity. For the possibility of a perpetual residence with them could only result from his possession of this attribute. To be intimately in communion with the Lord's people, at all times and in all places, so as to impart what consolation he saw to be needful, and to supply all spiritual assistance, unless he himself were really and essentially omnipresent, would be impossible. It is the express property of the creature of every degree, to be limited by place and confined in operation; and this is a certain criterion of character. He, therefore, who possesses infinity, cannot but be infinite.

The *Omniscience* of the blessed Spirit arises out of his *Omnipresence*, and may be proved by the same arguments. And unless any man can suppose, that the great Redeemer of the world hath committed the finishing part of his gracious scheme of salvation to a *creature*, and to a Being, whose inspiration is partial and limited; it would, I conceive, be going about to establish a self-evident proposition, to offer any testimonies in proof, that the Holy Ghost is omniscient.

If Omnipotence* be considered as a sufficient attes-

* Though, no doubt, all the attributes of deity are so many standards of character, which call up the human mind to a train of duties corresponding to the contemplation of them, and would afford large scope, to raise the most delightful subjects of this nature, from every one; yet the idea is altogether inadmissible in the present work. I cannot, however, forbear offering a short observation on the *Omnipotency* of the blessed Spirit, in that particular view of it which respects its operation, when exerted in human weakness. Godly minds are pretty generally accustomed to consider this divine perfection in that ordinary way, as manifested in the support and government of the universe, and, no doubt, find in it, what it admirably furnisheth, a source of holy joy and confidence in the contemplation. But the view of this great attribute, as illustrated in the feebleness of believers, is, the considering it in a light in which it is not, I imagine, so frequently regarded; though, to the individual himself, it certainly hath somewhat more peculiarly interesting to recommend it to his notice.

The Omnipotency of the GODHEAD in raising up great instruments to accomplish great purposes, commands, no doubt, our highest admi-

tation of GODHEAD, all the works in which the blessed Spirit has been, and is now, engaged in every dispensa-

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ration. The *earthquake* and the *storm*, considered as his ministers, afford awful instances of his sovereignty and power. But yet, when he is pleased to pass by such as these, and to accomplish great designs by very humble means, and such as in themselves are perfectly unsuited to the work, choosing "weak things, to confound the mighty; and even things that are not, to bring to nought things that are;" there is somewhat in this, which arrests the attention still more powerfully, to trace the finger of God. There is a beautiful passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which explains this doctrine more forcibly than any form of reasoning I can adopt. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff," (Isa. xli. 14, 15.) The figure of a poor contemptible worm of the earth, so helpless in itself as to be in danger of being crushed by the foot of every passenger, is admirably chosen to represent the feebleness of man. And the strength imparted by his Redeemer could never have been more nervously expressed than in the image of "a worm threshing the mountains," those mightiest works of nature. And what is very remarkable in the terms made use of, God does not say that he will first make him great and powerful, and that then such operations shall be accomplished; but the character of the reptile is still preserved: it is the *worm* that is to "thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff." And how strikingly is all this exemplified in all the dispensations both of providence and grace, in the life of every believer! What a subject, indeed, is thrown open to our view, in the wide universe of God, under every department of the divine agency! But I must limit my observations to the *particular* illustrations of it, in the history of the faithful. In the dispensations of God's *providence*, how refreshing is it to trace the Omnipotence of the blessed Spirit, manifested towards them in all the various means of provision, adapted to their multiform wants and necessities! It is all a mystery how he supports his faithful people under the pressure of their troubles. How his strength is perfected in their weakness, diversified as it is in so many millions of instances, and yet extending his care to each of them, as if that *one* attracted all his regard. But if the ordinary dispensations of his *providence* be so wonderful, what must those of his *grace* be, but a continued miracle from the beginning to the end! That this heavenly spark should not be lost and extinguished, when first falling into such a sea of corruption, as the human heart; that it should continue and burn in secret; that "many waters shall not be able to quench it;" but that at length it should brighten up and kindle into a flame: these are all mysteries, which can only be referred to the unsearchable wisdom and power of God. And what a divine property must that be which is thus rendered most illustrious in the weakness of his creatures! It is not exerted in supporting what is already strong;

tion of providence and grace, are so many united testimonies, in ascribing this great attribute unto him. Indeed the evidence of St. Paul is enough to certify his possession of this Almighty perfection: for he saith in one of his epistles, that all the signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds, which were wrought by his instrumentality, in the course of his ministry, were all accomplished by the power of the Spirit. And what less than Omnipotence could impart to man the ability of working miracles, and of altering, at his pleasure, the established order of nature? And yet more than this, what must, if possible, be esteemed a still higher proof of Omnipotency, and which is among the peculiar offices of the Holy Ghost, is that grand operation in the soul of man, in raising the sinner, "dead in trespasses and sins," to a new and spiritual life.

I shall mention but one attribute more, in proof of the GODHEAD of the blessed Spirit, and that is, his *wisdom:* which is indeed so high a distinction in the Divine character, that in many parts of Scripture we find that God is expressly called by this name. One of the apostles with a peculiar kind of emphasis styles him, "the only wise God," (Jude 25.) The possession of this attribute

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not in helping what possesses some power; nor in cleansing what is in part holy: but in taking from the mass of helpless, infirm, and polluted creatures of the dust, and purifying them for his glory. In no point of view does this great attribute of the blessed Spirit appear to such advantage, or become so recommending to the heart of man, as when manifested in the weakness of the creature. Oh! that the faithful could be made more and more sensible, of the resources they possess in it, for every occasion of life. That when "the empty soul is made hungry," and "the drink of the thirsty fail," they would trace the divine intention therein, and live more upon "that bread which is handed to them in secret." And were the Lord's people but to distinguish themselves as his people, by this conduct, they would be better prepared for such needful transitions in life, as when from the *mountain* of retirement and prayer, where the manifestation of the divine presence is sometimes graciously afforded them, they are led, like their Master, into the *wilderness* to sustain the conflicts of the tempter; and where, during such seasons, all human aids are withdrawn, on purpose that they may cast "all their care upon him who careth for them."

by the Holy Ghost, is evident from the whole tenor of the sacred writings. He is known among other titles, as "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah," (Isaiah xi. 2.) But it is needless to multiply arguments in proof. The peculiar nature of his office, on the minds of believers, manifesteth, that he "is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," (Ephes. i. 17.) He, who is given "to lead his people into all truth;" to "bring all things to their remembrance;" to teach them in critical moments of danger how to act; and to be a mouth and wisdom to them, which "all their adversaries should neither be able to gainsay or resist;" must eminently possess qualities suitable to the performance, and "in him be hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Coloss. ii. 3.)

I have now finished all the testimonies I think it necessary to produce, in proof of the Holy Ghost's divinity, from the several *names*, *titles*, and *attributes*, by which he is known in Scripture. The evidences to the same amount of this great doctrine, yet remaining to be considered, are to be gathered from his *operations*. But these must be reserved for the subject of the succeeding discourse. I have only, in the interim, to repeat an earnest prayer to Almighty God, that both what has been already reviewed, and what shall hereafter be brought before you upon this solemn topic, may be all accompanied with the blessing of his grace!

SERMON VI.

ROMANS I. 20.

For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

In examining the proofs of any important doctrine, it is a gratifying consideration that we are not supplied with one or two evidences only, and such as are of a questionable nature, but are furnished with many which are in themselves unanswerable; and find increasing testimonies as we prosecute the path of inquiry of the same happy coincidence. Of this kind are the proofs of Scripture respecting the Godhead of the Holy Ghost. In our researches on this subject, we have already attained an eminence, from what has been done in the preceding sermons, which not only enables us to look back and behold the ground over which we have traversed, covered with very satisfying proofs of the truth of this doctrine; but the plain, which again opens to our view before us, appears filled with new testimonies to the same amount, inviting our inspection and examination. And by their importance the inducement is the more increased. For though the *names*, and *titles*, and *attributes*, by which (as we have seen) the blessed Spirit is known in Scripture, are certainly so many positive attestations to the Divinity of his person; yet, when we further behold those attributes brought into action, and in the various *operations* carried on in the world, both of providence and grace, we trace an uniform exertion of divine properties, exercised by the Holy Ghost; these

form another class of evidences, if possible, still more decisive; and are, what the apostle calls, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world," manifested by their effects, and shadowing forth "his eternal power and Godhead." It is to the view of these operations of the blessed Spirit, in the general economy of the divine dispensations, as to so many additional proofs of the GODHEAD of his person, that your present attention is to be directed.

Preparatory, however, to the exhibition intended, that the evidence arising therefrom may be strengthened, I would desire to notice a circumstance of some weight in the argument, which results from the evident inattention of the sacred writers, to any priority of order, when using together the names of the several persons of the Godhead, by which they are known in Scripture. This observation is certainly of no inconsiderable consequence to the subject before us. For if our blessed Lord and the Holy Ghost possessed not a community with the Father in the essence of GODHEAD, how comes it to pass that they should be so often mentioned as such in the same form? It would be perfectly unaccountable, even in a single instance, much less upon many occasions, that either of them should be classed in equal terms with him, or named together, without some qualifying precedence being always preserved, to indicate the vast distinction. But the sacred writers have observed no such thing. In the silence of Scripture, therefore, upon this subject; nay, from the invariable method adopted of mentioning them together, by the names under which they are revealed to us, and without respect of person, what possible inference can be drawn from it, but that there is no inequality? It plainly appears from hence, that the inspired penmen studied no order in the nomination of the sacred Three, and from their evident inattention to it, it should seem to be but a just and fair conclusion, that none exists. A few passages from

Scripture will serve to explain this matter more fully, and set it in a clear light.

The apostle Paul concludes his second Epistle to the Corinthians, in these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen." This text hath been already noticed under another branch of our subject, in proof of the personality of the Holy Ghost; and the reasoning there advanced will not be found altogether inapplicable to the present argument.* But in addition to what was then said, it may now be observed, that if there had been any superiority supposed by the apostle existing in the Father to the person of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost, it is a circumstance which must appear wonderfully unaccountable, that he should not only class them together, without the smallest intimation of any inequality or difference, but even give a precedence to Christ, in the order of nomination; and from the whole form of words, which he hath adopted, leave every reader impressed with a full assurance, that the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, are of equal importance with the love of God.

So again, in one of his epistles to the Thessalonians, the same inattention to any priority is observable. "Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you," (1 Thess. iii. 11.) Here the foregoing order is inverted. The Holy Ghost has precedence, and Christ is last named. I venture to conclude, that the Holy Ghost is meant by him, whom the apostle calls *God himself;* for the conjunction KAI, which is used copulative, doth as fully specify a distinction between *God himself*, and *our Father*, as between *our Father*, and *our Lord Jesus Christ.* And I am the more justified in this conclusion from a similar order of expression, observable in the same apostle's writings, in a passage of his second epistle to the Thessalonians,

* See Sermon III. page 263, *et seq.*

where he says, "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," (2 Thess. iii. 5.) It will hardly be disputed, I believe, that the Lord, whom the apostle prays might direct their hearts, is the Holy Ghost; not only because he is particularly distinguished from God the Father, into whose love he is to direct them; and from the person of Christ, the patient waiting for of whom he desires; but also because the very grace prayed for is among the peculiar gifts and operations of the blessed Spirit. "The love of God (the same apostle elsewhere taught) is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," (Rom. v. 5.)

The same argument in proof of the equality of persons in the sacred Three, from the inattention to any order in precedence, may be taken from another passage in St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians; where, speaking of the gospel dispensation, he calls it, "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," (Coloss. ii. 2.) I must here again insist, that the first person, mentioned under the appellation of *God*, is the Holy Ghost; for the conjunction (as in the former instance) which is made use of, to specify a distinction between the first and second person named, is the same which is used to separate the second from the third; and of consequence, if any conclusion were attempted to be made, that God and the Father, in this verse, were intended to express but one and the same person; it must follow, that the whole three persons mentioned would mean no other; which, if it proves any thing, will prove more than is intended. In this sense also, the apostle's meaning will be rather confused and unintelligible. He is speaking of the gospel covenant, as the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ: and unquestionably the sacred acts, wrought by each in the great scheme of human redemption, become eminently so. But, under the acceptation that the apostle had no such meaning, the mystery would be done away.

I shall not enlarge on this argument.* The texts, which I have produced from Scripture, are sufficient to shew the evident disregard of the sacred writers, to any priority of order, in the nomination of the persons in the Godhead. And as far as any testimony, of an indirect nature is valid to the purpose, it becomes no inconsiderable one, in my apprehension, to our present argument.

But though the assurance we gather from hence, in support of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, cannot but be satisfactory, when viewed in connection with other testimonies of an higher nature; yet, no doubt, the grand evidence is that which arises from direct and positive proof. It certainly would be wrong, while professedly seeking for every information relative to our subject, which might contribute to the end in view, to omit any circumstance, however small and inconsiderable it might appear in itself, when compared with others; but let it not be supposed, that the stress of the argument is intended to be placed upon any such kind of negative proofs. We are in possession of too many of a direct nature to render this necessary. And the instances which are at hand to be produced of this sort, so fully and unequivocally stamp the certainty of the blessed Spirit's divinity, that they cannot fail of carrying the most absolute conviction with them, to the breast of all candid and impartial persons. For when we behold, in the works effected by his immediate ministry, every attribute called into action, and every property by which GODHEAD can be defined or illustrated, there can be no reason for hesitation in ascribing unto him "the honour due unto His name."

It hath been already observed, that the footsteps of

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* Several passages of a similar tendency might have been brought forward in confirmation of the doctrine; but to avoid prolixity, they are omitted. If the reader wishes for additional proofs of the kind, he may consult 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6; Ephes. v. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 16; Gal. i. 1, &c.

this august Being are discernible from the very commencement of things. And as we traced, under every department of his *peculiar* ministry in the early ages of mankind, the traits which distinguished his character; so in those operations which belong to him, in *common* with the Father, and the Son, we may discover the same marks of his presence, under every dispensation of the Divine will, and in all the periods of the world, both in the works of providence and grace.

If we begin with that instance of it, which in point of order claims our first attention, the work of *creation*, we shall discover immediate proofs of the Holy Ghost's agency, and, of consequence, the most unquestionable testimony will result therefrom to the GODHEAD of his person.

As all the operations of nature are said to be the acts of the Father, and the Son; so are they as fully ascribed to the Holy Ghost. We read that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (Gen. i. 1:) that "God made the world and all things therein," (Acts xvii. 24:) which, without doubt, is said in immediate reference to the Father. I think it unnecessary to quote any more passages of Scripture which are express to this doctrine. The Book of God is full of it, and it is a truth which remains unquestionable. But the same operations are from the same authority, equally imputed to that WORD, "which was in the beginning with God and was God:" for it is as expressly said, that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made," (John i. 1, 2, 3.)

Neither is it expedient to enumerate the numberless parts of the sacred oracles which are as direct to the same purport. And yet no less, at the same time, is it said in a positive application to the Holy Ghost, that "by the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (the *Spirit* in the

original, רוח) of His mouth," (Psalm xxxiii. 6.) "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens," (Job xxvi. 13.) These, then, are so many palpable and decided evidences, that the work of creation occupied the joint agency of the blessed Three. And while in the same language, and from the same authority of inspiration, we demand, "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?" (Malachi ii. 10,) the certainty of this unquestionable truth establisheth the assurance of the divine unity in the Godhead: no less at the same time do those Scriptures (with many others to the same amount, which, had it been necessary, might have been quoted) as plainly teach us, that there is a mysterious existence of three persons in the one indivisible essence of GODHEAD. So obvious is this first principle of religion, that it is written in the very title-page of the Bible, and in characters so legible, that "he who runs may read."

Such a testimony, when we consider that it is taken from the great source of all truth, where there can be no possibility of error or delusion, is of itself sufficient in confirmation, both of the concurrence of the Holy Ghost in the work of creation, and of the GODHEAD of his person. But we may proceed yet further in the argument, and, from some peculiar traces of his agency, infer the same doctrine in still additional characters.

It is an observation upon this point well worth regarding, that the GODHEAD, when revealed to us under the character of the Creator, is frequently spoken of in the plural number. "Let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness," (Gen. i. 26.) "The man is become as one of US," (Gen. iii. 22:) which is certainly a very remarkable phraseology, and not to be accounted for but upon the presumption, that there is a plurality of persons subsisting in the Godhead, as before observed.

Some other reasons have been assigned, but by no means any that are in the least satisfactory. It has been said, that the form adopted of a plural number to express

the GODHEAD by, is in accommodation to the custom of earthly princes, who are used to speak in the same manner. But what an absurd and childish idea is this! and what a wretched subterfuge to get rid of a difficulty! As if the language of the infinite Jehovah should be framed to the standard of human forms, and God should condescend to borrow modes of expression from his creatures! Another equally futile reason has been given, on the supposition, (which the Jews took up with, in order to invalidate our blessed Lord's claim to the divine Unity which he asserted he had with his Father,) that when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," he addressed himself to the *angels*. A sentiment this, which is not only in opposition to Scripture, but is contrary to all common sense and reason. "Who hath known (saith the apostle) the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 34.) And no man, surely, ever maintained for a moment so preposterous an opinion, as to imagine that he was the joint production of God and the angels; or that he was made in their likeness! Had the objectors read the Scriptures with due attention, they might have known, that similar phrases are made use of, respecting the GODHEAD, in other places of the sacred Word, and upon other occasions. For example, in the time of building the Tower of Babel, "the Lord said, Let US go down," (Gen. xi. 6, 7.) And again, in the vision which the prophet Isaiah saw of the divine glory, when he heard the voice of the Lord; the words he heard were, "Whom shall I send, and who shall go for US," (Isaiah vi. 8.) And in like manner the prophet Zechariah, in describing the Man whose name is the BRANCH, as the Priest of the temple, uses the same remarkable phrase: "He shall be a Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," (Zech. vi. 12, 13.) All these would be the grossest solecisms indeed, if understood of one being, without an allusion to this plu-

rality of character. From these considerations, in addition to what hath been already observed upon this subject, in the preceding sermon, (that the name of God in the *plural* number, is frequently joined to other words in the *singular*,) there seems to arise a very striking proof, that there is a plurality of persons existing in the unity of GODHEAD, which as it serves to illustrate more fully this prime article of religion, so does it become a very satisfactory evidence to the point before us, of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.

I must not omit another argument in proof of the agency of the blessed Spirit, in the works of *creation;* because it is derived from his more immediate operations on *our* nature: I mean, respecting his regeneration of the heart. Under this consideration there are strong leading points to shew, that he, who is so peculiarly interested in accomplishing the *second* creation, must be supposed to have been as intimately employed in the *first*. The analogy of the operations, and both being the sole work of God, becomes a very convincing evidence that they can only proceed from one and the same Almighty power.

It is said, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," (Gen. ii. 7.) There is a striking opposition between the terms made use of, the "dust of the ground," and the "breath of life," (or as the word might have been, and is translated in other places of Scripture, the *Spirit of life;*) thereby intimating, as expressly as possible, the union of two principles diametrically opposite in their nature and effects to each other, to constitute the formation of the human body. By one of which man is connected with earth, by the other related to heaven; and while his immortal part links him in the chain of existence with angels, his origin from dust compels him to "say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art

my mother and my sister," (Job xvii. 14.) This principle of animation, given to the dust of the ground, and by which man becomes a living soul, is not only ascribed to the immediate agency of the Spirit of life, the Holy Ghost, but agreeably to the analogy of Scripture, is said to be his peculiar operation. For, in allusion to the first creation of man, Job says, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," (Job xxxiii. 4;) so in the second, or spiritual birth, the great work is by Christ himself, declared to result from the same divine agent. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," (John vi. 63.) And hence the apostle Paul, speaking of the new birth in the soul of man, ascribes the whole work of regeneration to him, from whom man first derived existence. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," (Ephes. ii. 1.) "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," (Rom. viii. 11.) This view of the Holy Ghost, and his operations upon mankind, exercised in the *first* creation, and in the renovation of the human soul by his grace in the *second*, carries with it a beautiful analogy, and becomes peculiarly illustrative of the divinity of his person."*

From such proofs of the agency of the Holy Ghost, as are displayed in the works of *creation*, if we pass on to the view of his omnipotency in the acts of *preservation*, we shall find similar instances in testimony of his

* It is no small argument in addition to these observations, that the very term *regeneration* expresses, in its original, the compound of two words, which imply the same doctrine, (παλιγγενεσια:) the nearest literal translation of which is *again created*. And as in the New Testament this work is invariably ascribed to the sole operation of the Holy Ghost, nothing can be more decisive in proof that the *creating again* presupposes, that it is the same Being who created *before;* for otherwise the term is improper. And this alone is sufficient to substantiate the fact itself, that the creation of man is among the operations of the Holy Ghost.

GODHEAD, from the exercise of his unremitted attention, in this divine character. The same sacred authority, which ascribes this distinguishing attribute both to the Father and the Son, is equally express in ascribing it also to the Holy Ghost. In that sublime hymn of praise, in which the Psalmist magnifies the wisdom of God in the works of creation; the destruction, as well as the preservation, of all the several orders of animated life, are referred to the immediate agency of the blessed Spirit. "When thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: when thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust: when thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth," (Psalm civ. 29, 30.) And as the characters, which imply full and absolute GODHEAD, are without reserve considered as so many positive *criteria*, when applied to the Father and to the Son; it is obvious that the same distinctions and properties can have no other meaning when spoken of the Holy Ghost. The Father is said to have "life in himself," (John v. 26.) The Son is said to be "the light and the life of men," (John i. 4.) And in like manner we are taught of the Holy Ghost, that "the Spirit giveth life," (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

And as our present existence is thus derived from the joint operation of the divine agency of the blessed Three, so it is remarkable, that the eternal life of believers is, in the same manner, indiscriminately ascribed to each of the divine Persons. One apostle refers it to the bounty of God the Father, and tells us that "eternal life is the gift of God," (Rom. vi. 23.) Another expressly assures us, that "it is in the Son," (1 John v. 11.) Whilst in a third place of Scripture it is said, that "they who sow to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," (Gal. vi. 8.) As operations of this nature can only, in every instance, be the acts of an omnipotent Being, and are in themselves sufficient indications of GODHEAD, we are of necessity compelled to acknowledge the blessed

Spirit under this character. He is clearly revealed to us in Scripture as the Almighty agent in common with the Father and the Son, as well in preservation as in creation: and by an undeniable consequence it must follow, as palpable as any one cause is proved by its effects, that the Holy Ghost is God. I think it perfectly unnecessary to add any further proofs of his GODHEAD from the works of creation and preservation. A service of this kind would be little better than holding a taper to the sun. Common apprehension is sufficient to the conviction, that none but Jehovah can be competent to the works of creation. And the Being who is alone competent to create, can be alone able to preserve. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." To bring forward any argument, therefore, in support of a point so very plain and allowed, would be superfluous. I pass on to other proofs of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, from the common operations of his ministry, in concurrence with the Divine Father and the Eternal Son.

In the dispensation of grace, no less than in the works of nature, we find the same manifestations of divinity distinguishing the blessed Spirit. Indeed it would be altogether unaccountable, if this analogy were not to be traced, pervading every part of the divine system. For when we discern such evident marks, that the formation and support of the universe, both natural and intellectual, have engaged the joint agency of all the sacred persons of the Godhead, this community of agency, under one view of the divine government, indicates that there is the same through all. And perhaps the reason (with humility be it spoken) why the sacred characters which constitute the GODHEAD are separately mentioned, is but to convey the information to the human mind, that there is a distinction of persons, by representing the peculiar acts of each in the economy of grace, that mankind may have a proper apprehension of the obligations due to each; while their joint operations in

the same acts are intended to keep alive the remembrance of what, above all things, is never to be lost sight of, a thorough conviction of the unity of the divine character.

This doctrine will appear equally manifest, under every other particular of God's dispensations respecting mankind, as those which have been already reviewed.

Redemption, as an act of grace, is clearly the result of the divine love in the whole three persons of the Godhead: for it said by the prophet, that "the counsel of peace is between them," (Zech. vi. 13.) And, agreeably to this, all the parts of Scripture relating to it concur. The Psalmist, speaking of this blessing, ascribes it immediately to the gift of the Father. "He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever, holy and reverend is his name," (Psalm cxi. 9.) And the prophet Isaiah in like manner; "the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel," (Isa. xliv. 23.) But that the persons of the Son and the Holy Ghost are not excluded from a participation in this work of grace, is evident from the whole tenor of the sacred word. All the inspired writers unite in this testimony, that "it is through the offering of the body of Jesus upon the cross, that he hath obtained eternal redemption for us," (Heb. ix. 12:) and expressly in allusion to the Holy Ghost we are assured, that the blood of Christ was offered "through the eternal Spirit," (Heb. ix. 14.)

But though this community of agency runs through every act, both of nature and grace, it is very remarkable, that at the same time that all the sacred persons of the Godhead are thus represented as engaged in the same operations, there are some instances in the divine economy, where the work is more immediately referred to the actions of one, rather than to those of the other; which though not intended to imply any exclusion of the whole, yet seem to indicate a more peculiar agency.

The act of *creation* (for example) is, in an eminent manner, referred to the immediate operation of the

Almighty Father. It is said in Scripture to be his work. And if we are taught to look up to Him in any one character, more particularly than in another, it is in that of our Creator. But, at the same time, many parts in the word of God (as you have seen) are as express to instruct us, that this view of the Father is by no means in exclusion, either of the person of the Eternal Word, or of the blessed Spirit; for both are represented as joint agents with him in all those sovereign acts of omnipotence, and equally participate in the same operations of GODHEAD.

Similar to this is the mystery of our *redemption.* The immediate cause of this divine love is peculiarly ascribed to the person of Christ. It is he, we are taught, "who hath made our peace through the blood of his cross," (Coloss. i. 20:) "and in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," (Ephes. i. 7.) But neither can this be understood but in a connection with God the Father and the Holy Ghost; because we are told from the same unquestionable authority, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," (2 Cor. v. 19:) and it is the Father who assumes that distinguishing attribute proclaimed by the prophet, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour," (Isa. xliii. 11.) While we are no less clearly taught, that Christ offered himself *through* the Eternal Spirit, (Heb. ix. 14,) by whom believers "are sealed unto the day of redemption," (Ephes. v. 30.)

In like manner, though the whole work of *sanctification* is the peculiar agency of the Holy Ghost, yet not so peculiarly his as to belong not to the operations both of the Father and of the Son; for Scripture in one place declares, that believers "are sanctified by God the Father," (Jude 1;) and in another, that it is "Jesus who sanctifieth the people with his own blood," (Heb. xiii. 12;) and that he is made of God unto us, "wisdom and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. i. 30.)

But what is the plain doctrine to be deduced from these different views of the divine character, but that which hath been already stated? Does it not appear to be the evident intention of God, in such revelations of himself, to teach us (as I before remarked) in the plainest terms our faculties are at present capable of receiving, that there is a distinction of persons in the GODHEAD; and yet that is but one and the same act, from one and the same will and power: for though they are three distinct persons, yet, by an ineffable and mysterious unity of essence, they are but one God. The pride of human intellect may revolt at this, because inexplicable to its perfect apprehension, but the fact will not be less true on that account. Such acts of GODHEAD, as are fully and circumstantially ascribed in Scripture to each of the sacred persons of the Godhead, are inadmissible but upon this conclusion; and as both reason and revelation concur, in fixing the basis of all religion in the unity of the divine essence, it must follow, that this involves in it the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the divine character. This great truth, which is the leading principle of our holy faith, respecting the first object of it, serves as a guide to our examination of every other perfection among the dispensations of grace in the GODHEAD.

Justification is another of God's peculiar operations in the work of redemption; for it is plain that none but God can be competent to its performance. The very deed implies the fullest and most absolute GODHEAD in the agent. It were an absurdity too palpable to deserve a name, to suppose a possibility of being justified by a creature. This proof of divinity also is indifferently mentioned in Scripture among the operations of the sacred Three. The apostle Paul, speaking of the Di-

vine Father, says, "it is God that justifieth," (Rom. viii. 33,) and "He justifieth the ungodly," (Rom. iv. 5.) "It is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith," (Rom. iii. 30.) But the same Scriptures declare, that "Christ was raised for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25;) and that we are "justified by his blood," (Rom. v. 9.) And no less, while ascribing this divine property to Christ, "who as God's righteous servant will justify many," (Isa. liii. 11;) the Holy Ghost is included in the same efficient agency, when it is said that "we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

And to mention but one instance more, in proof of the same divinity of character being indifferently ascribed to all, the final act of Omnipotence, in the dispensations of grace towards mankind, in the resurrection of the dead, is express to this purpose. In reference to the Father we are instructed, that "he hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us, by his own power," (1 Cor. vi. 14.) Whilst, in allusion to Christ, it is said, that "the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth," (John v. 28.) And of the Holy Ghost we are told, that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," (John vi. 63;) and "He shall quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us," (Rom. viii. 11.)

These operations, simply reviewed as so many acts of GODHEAD, (for I am at present considering them under this idea,) are sufficient, I hope, in proof of the leading object of this discourse, to establish the certainty of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. But, indeed, this point is so inseparably blended with the testimonies which are in proof of the GODHEAD of the Almighty Father, and the Eternal Son, that the examination of the evidences for the one, necessarily connects with it the view of the evidences for the others, and mutually operates to the confirmation of the whole. Every part,

according to the language of the apostle, tends " to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," (Colos. ii. 2.)

If, after exhibiting this " cloud of witnesses," our limits admitted, or it became necessary to add any thing more, in confirmation of the truth of the doctrine, it would be, I conceive, no very difficult matter to contend for the GODHEAD of the blessed Spirit, on the ground that he is never mentioned in Scripture among the worshippers of God. It is certainly the property of intelligent creatures of every order to present homage to the Creator: and in proportion to the exalted rank any being holds in the scale of existence, so much the more eminently distinguished might it be expected that he would appear in the circle of those who adore the great Jehovah. It is extraordinary, therefore, upon the supposition that the Holy Ghost is a created being, that while the sacred writers are continually calling upon "every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord," and the whole universe of the intellectual creation is described as offering ceaseless adorations unto him, that the blessed Spirit is not once mentioned as joining in the chorus! There is surely somewhat worth regarding in this argument. I hope that no one will endeavour to evade it by the denial of the Holy Ghost's personality. The proofs of this doctrine, which have been recently reviewed in the former part of this work, are too palpable, I trust, to admit of the supposition. And therefore I cannot but conceive, that the total silence of Scripture, respecting the blessed Spirit's worship of God, becomes no inconsiderable proof as a collateral testimony to the GODHEAD of his person.

Neither, indeed, is it sufficient to derive a negative kind of evidence from the silence of Scripture on this subject; we may proceed further in the argument, and prove that the Holy Ghost has himself received divine honours. The representation which the prophet Isaiah

has given to that glorious manifestation of GODHEAD, which he beheld in a vision, when the seraphim veiled their faces, and cried one to another, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts! plainly testifies that the Holy Spirit was included. And that St. Paul entertained such sentiments respecting it, hath been already shewn, from his illustration of the prophet's words. But, in addition to this, it may also be observed, that the apostle himself did, in his practice, perform the same acts of adoration to the Holy Ghost, which appear to be countenanced by his writings. His appeal to the blessed Spirit as a witness, and the swearing by his name (when considered according to the tenor of the Jewish law in those particulars) are among the highest proofs of supreme adoration. "The worship of the Lord, and the swearing by his name," (Deut. vi. 13,) were among the divine honours connected together, and peculiarly appropriated to Jehovah. And the apostle evidently intended both, when upon a remarkable occasion, in proof of his ministerial integrity, he made a direct appeal to the Holy Ghost: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. ix. 1.) Nay, is it not a positive precept of Christ to this amount, when he said, "pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers in his harvest," (Luke x. 2.) For who is the Lord of the spiritual harvest but the Holy Ghost? Was he not evidently manifested under this character, when in the college of apostles, in answer to their fastings and ministrations, he said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them?" (Acts xiii. 2.) Can there be a more decisive evidence than this, that the Holy Ghost is the Lord of the harvest, in thus sending forth labourers into it? And can we require a precept from a higher authority than our Lord himself, to offer prayers to him under this character? And shall we then need stronger and more

convincing proofs of the GODHEAD of his person to whom prayer is commanded to be offered?

Add to all this, what is well to be considered, I mean the divine operations which the Holy Spirit performs in the heart of believers, which are effectual to "convince them of sin," and of *righteousness*, and of *judgment;* to "pour out a spirit of grace and supplication" upon them; in awakening a recollection of the sins of nature; to cause the eye "to look upon him whom they have pierced;" and the heart to "mourn bitterly, as one that mourneth for his first-born:" that it is He, the blessed Spirit of truth, which is "to guide into all truth;" the *Comforter* of the Lord's people; the "helper of their infirmities;" by whom alone "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart;" who "sanctifies them wholly; seals them to the day of redemption;" and at the great restitution of all things, will be the cause of "quickening their mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in them;" who that duly contemplates these acts of the Holy Ghost, and more especially, if he feels their effects in his own heart, but must conclude that the tribute of humble prayer and adoration is justly due to such a Being? Can our souls be really conscious that we stand in need of such blessings, and shall they neither be implored, nor when received, acknowleged? Is it possible for the immortal seed, which no mortal can create or sustain, to grow up in the heart of man "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," and no prayer, no supplication be offered for the rain and the dew of heaven to fall upon it? Surely, when we come to our future state, and see Him, who is now so unremittingly employed in such acts of beneficence, our souls will overflow with holy gratitude towards a Being, to whom we are so unspeakably indebted; and if the praise will be due then, is not both prayer and praise proper now? Oh! Eternal Spirit, how shall creatures, who depend so much upon thy saving

grace and mercy, be silent upon the occasion? Might not, indeed, the very stones cry out, if we were to hold our peace? Come, thou holy Source of all devotion, for thou only canst inspire our hearts therewith, come and awaken up every faculty of our souls, to implore thy grace, and to speak thy praise. Enable us to feel somewhat of that ardour which the host above experience, who are employed in ceaseless adoration before the throne of God. And while they fill heaven with their grateful acclamations, let us proclaim thy mercies through the earth; "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power," (Rev. iv. 11.) "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever. Amen." (Rev. vii. 12.)

And now before we prosecute the subject further, and enter upon the more *peculiar* operations of the Holy Ghost's ministry under the gospel dispensation, suffer me to hope, that the evidences of the GODHEAD of his person, have been completely satisfactory. They cannot indeed but prove so, where the mind is under the tutorage of divine grace. But where this is not the case, and reason will not bend to the instruction of revelation, the question will be perpetually occurring, in the scepticism of the Jewish ruler, "How can these things be?" And while men, neglecting the light of heaven, pursue the meteors raised by pride and vanity, the departure from the truth will be but the wider, until the vapour disappears, and they are left in total darkness. In what an awful strain of the most severe and indignant irony, does the Lord, by the prophet, address such characters! "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow," (Isaiah l. 11.) But for the true believer, who to the *outward* evidence of the divine word, hath that

inward testimony, in "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost;" this corroboration of proof, in an act which none but the Divinity himself could accomplish, becomes an infallible assurance to him of the GODHEAD of the blessed Spirit. Go on, humble soul, under the same gracious instructor, who "will teach thee more of his ways, and thou shalt walk in his paths," (Isaiah ii. 3.) Wait upon him continually for the bread which is handed to thee in secret, till, in the strength of that spiritual food, thou findest somewhat of the prophet's animation, which comforted and supported him in his forty days' journey to the mount of God. And though *the highway is so* generally *unoccupied*, and *travellers seek their path through by-ways;* yet the time is hastening "when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob," (Isa. ii. 2.) And oh! what inconceivable joy will pour in upon the soul in that day, when it shall be said, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," (Isaiah xxv. 9.)

SERMON VII.

ACTS II. 17.

It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.

WITH a view to conciliate your regard to the important subject which hath now, through several discourses, solicited your attention, and to recompense, in the best manner I have been able, the favourable indulgence you have granted me, it has been my study, as much as possible, to omit every thing superfluous upon the occasion, and to avoid all unnecessary prolixity. The nature of my design indeed hath obliged me repeatedly to traverse the sacred volume, in quest of evidences connected with the grand object in view; and hence it is, that the same passages of Scripture have been more than once brought forward, in support of the different parts of the argument: perhaps in doing this, I may have been more circumstantial than was absolutely expedient. Yet when it shall be considered how very interesting the topic proposed to our discussion is, it is hardly possible, I think, to be too minute and attentive in its investigation. I should have thought myself extremely reprehensible, had I knowingly omitted any thing material, which might have contributed to our information respecting an article of faith so intimately blended with the very existence of vital Christianity.

The arrangement I have wished to observe was, in a progressive manner, to go through the whole of the sacred records in the examination of their testimonies concerning the blessed Spirit. With relation, therefore, to this inquiry from the earliest period, my first object was

naturally directed to answer that necessary question which forms the basis of the whole subject, "Whether there be any Holy Ghost?" And this I endeavoured to perform, by examining such testimonies of his ministry, in the ages antecedent to our Lord's advent in the flesh, as might fully prove the certainty of his existence. In the pursuit of proofs on this point, you saw what a boundless prospect opened to our view, in the numerous and diversified operations, clearly imputable to his express agency in those early periods. Our next attention was therefrom unavoidably excited to inquire into the evidences concerning the *Person* and GODHEAD of a Being to whom such wonderful properties are ascribed. And though the entering upon the examination of these points hath, in some measure, occasioned a digression from immediately pursuing the track of the blessed Spirit's ministration, continued under the gospel dispensation; yet the establishing the clear conviction of this truth, which is among the prime articles of faith in the church of Christ, is surely of the highest consequence to prepare the mind for the reception of the doctrines connected with it, respecting the blessed Spirit's agency in the subsequent periods.

The gracious work, which Scripture teaches us this Divine Being wrought in the infancy of Christianity, and is now unremittingly employed in carrying on in the hearts of all true believers, whereby they are led, in a progression from grace to glory, depend altogether upon the certainty of his person and GODHEAD. For if the evidences of these be ill-founded, the conclusions drawn from them must come to nothing. The ground on which they are built being baseless and imaginary, the edifice erected upon it cannot but fall. Having however fully proved the certainty of these great truths, by the long train of testimonies which have been brought before you, I venture to persuade myself, that a full conviction thereof is impressed upon your mind in the

clearest characters, and shall therefore now proceed with the more confidence to the consideration of those works of the Holy Ghost, yet remaining to be noticed, of which we are informed by the gospel.

In order to the clearer apprehension of things, it will be necessary to call back your attention to the period at which we were arrived in a former discourse, when making researches after the testimonies of the blessed Spirit's ministration in the early ages of the world.* You may remember, that we traced the shades of his divine agency, under various manifestations of it, in a regular order, from the epoch of creation, to the morning of the evangelical day; at the dawn of which we discerned, that after a suspension of his operation by prophecy, for a long interval, from the last of the prophets, Malachi, to the very hour almost of our Lord's appearance in the flesh; the influence of the blessed Spirit upon the human mind began again to manifest itself, and a spirit of prophecy burst forth upon a few select characters, who were appointed to usher in the approaching Saviour. From this period it is that we are now to resume the subject. Every thing hitherto noticed, in allusion to the operations of the Holy Ghost, is to be considered but as a prelude to those great events promised to take place in the latter days, from the pouring out of the Spirit. And as every step we now advance becomes more and more important, I should hope, there will need no other inducement than the interest we bear in it, to keep your attention awake; and no less to preserve the same unremitting dependence upon divine aid, while we prosecute the path of inquiry concerning the gracious operations of the Spirit, in the different periods of the gospel.

The prophets, under the divine inspiration with which they uttered their predictions, had led us to the expectation of some gracious, and, till then, unheard of

* Sermon II.

manifestations of the Holy Spirit, which were to take place in the church of God, in the latter ages of the world. The words of the prophet Joel, quoted by the apostle Peter, are very express to this purpose. "In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaids I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* Neither is Joel singular in this prediction. The doctrine of the text is but parallel to the testimony of all the prophets, who have spoken on the same momentous subject. David had long before foretold the consequence of the Messiah's exaltation, that his ascension should be "to bestow gifts upon men," (Psalm lxviii. 18, 19.) And the evangelical prophet Isaiah, in his abundant testimony concerning the gospel dispensation, very largely described the effects which would attend it, in the pouring out of the Spirit; that in its eventual happy consequences it would be "like water poured out upon him that is thirsty," and like "floods upon the dry ground," when the Lord should "pour out his Spirit upon the seed of Jacob, and his blessing upon his offspring."† Jeremiah also describes the promised period to the Lord's people under the character of a new covenant, widely distinguished from the old, not only in its privileges, but in its very nature. God declared that this new law "should be put in their inward

* Compare Joel ii. 28, with Acts ii. 17, &c.

† Isaiah xliv. 2, 3. See also the 4th chap. and 54th verse.

parts, and be written in their hearts;" for that "he would be their God, and they should be his people." (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.) And Ezekiel being yet, if possible, more pointed and particular, as well by type as prophecy, shadowed the sketches of this illustrious event. The time was hastening, the prophet declared, when "the Lord would gather his people Israel from all countries whither they had been scattered," and he would "take away their abominations by putting a new Spirit within them," and removing the "heart of stone," and giving them "an heart of flesh." And to represent this important doctrine in still stronger characters, the Lord was graciously pleased, by the similitude of a vision of dry bones, animated by the wind breathing upon them at the divine command, to shew the prophet the same truth in a figure. For when the Lord had caused his servant to behold the vision, and had taught him that it was a type of his people, he added, that he would "put his Spirit in them, and they should live."* To the same

* Ezek. xi. 17—19. and chap. xxxvii. 1—14. There is something so beautiful and instructive in this figure, and it is so analogous to the whole doctrine of Scripture, of man's fallen state, and his recovery by the operations of the Holy Spirit, that it deserves to be considered a little more particularly. The vision, most probably, in its first and literal sense, had a relation to the deliverance of the Israelites from their captivity; and it may be considered also as typical of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the last day: but above all these, its grand allusion no doubt was to the spiritual resurrection of believers, which is to take place in the present life, prior to the resurrection of the body, as a state of grace becomes preparatory to a state of glory. And the illustration which God himself was pleased to give of it in part to this effect, when he said that "these bones are the whole house of Israel, and he would put his Spirit in them, and they should live," becomes an encouragement to trace the affinity yet further, between the type and the thing represented. And under this idea, we shall find a most perfect harmony and coincidence in all the parts of the vision.

The prophet is "led by the Spirit" into a valley "full of dry bones." Their lifeless state is suffered to be thoroughly impressed upon the prophet's mind, by a leisurely and attentive survey of them; for the Lord caused him to "pass by them round about," and he saw that they were "very many and very dry." When this was done, the Lord demanded of the prophet his opinion of their situation: "Son of man, can these

purport the prophet Zechariah testified, that in the latter days, God would "pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace

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bones live?" And when the man of God, with a becoming modesty, had referred the question unto the Lord's sole knowledge, as a matter though physically impossible, yet not too hard for Omnipotence to accomplish, he is commanded to "prophesy uuto them, and to bid them hear the word of the Lord." Had the prophet been like some *rational* Christians (as they affect to be distinguished) of the present hour, probably he would have expostulated with his Maker upon the occasion, and urged the unreasonableness and absurdity of such a service. But being a true descendant of the faithful Patriarch, "who against hope believed in hope," he presumed not to argue, but to obey. He prophesied as he was commanded: an astonishing effect instantly took place. There was a noise and shaking among them; bone uniting with bone, and sinews and flesh appearing, and a skin covering them above. But "there was no breath" in them. The precept is again renewed to the prophet, that he should invocate the breath from the four winds, "to breathe upon the slain, that they might live." He did as he was commanded, and the breath came into them, "and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Who doth not, or will not, see in all this, an exact emblem of man's spiritual death, iu the present world, and the absolute necessity of the Holy Ghost's exerting his regenerating power upon him, before he can arise to a new and incorruptible life? Can any thing more aptly figure the church of God in this lower world than a *valley?* or can the lifeless condition of man in sacred concerns be more strikingly set forth than under the metaphor of *dry bones?* And were the most awakening preacher of God's word, who has a just sense of himself, and of the nature of his commission, to be questioned like the prophet, whether any spiritual life can actuate the human mind with devotion, void of a power superior to that which is in man by nature; he must know the impossibility of it, and therefore, like him, could only refer such an act to the immediate effect of the Divine Agency. For is it our preaching, or our arguments of persuasion, which can awaken sinners "dead in trespasses and sins?" Vain, presumptuous man, whoever thou art, that thinks so! Nothing belonging to human nature can boast such excellence. But yet how admirably are we taught, in the event which followed the prophet's prophesying as he was commanded, that human means, though never the *efficient*, yet are sometimes the *instrumental* cause by which the Lord is pleased to accomplish his work of grace in the heart. Aud though he is indcpendent of all but his own supreme pleasure, yet doth he graciously condescend so to act by the feeblest ministers as may suit the purposes of his will. The success of the prophet therefore is our encouragement, as his ready obedience ought to be our example. For let our labours be exerted in the most barren soil of spiritual culture, if even as improbable to produce any thing as that dry bones should live, yet that ministry which is commissioned of God

and supplication." And lastly, to close all, our blessed Lord himself, in addition to what he privately taught his disciples upon this subject, in his public preaching to the people, made similar declarations. "He that believeth on me (says Christ,) as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this (St. John adds) spake he of the Spirit which they

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cannot fail; it must "prosper in the work whereunto he is pleased to send it."

If this spiritual illustration of the prophet's vision justify these remarks, a very awakening instruction arises from it, which intimately concerns both clergy and people. The man who ministers in holy things, sensible on whom the whole success of his labours depends, and carrying with him the consciousness of it in all the departments of his duty, will be taught therefrom to consider, that his place in God's house is rendered exactly similar to the prophet's in the valley. And while the recollection of his fellow-creatures' situation will prompt him to look round upon the congregation with all tenderness and compassion, as one sincerely desirous of ministering to their welfare; such sentiments will very powerfully induce him to look up, and to implore, with unceasing supplication, that blessing from above which can alone make his ministry beneficial: that his "gospel may come to them, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." And the people, who in the figure now under consideration may behold a type of human nature, may learn the infinite importance of having a just sense of it impressed upon the mind. For if all congregations are precisely in the state there represented, until the Lord hath "put his Spirit in them that they may live," how earnest ought every individual to be in his inquiry for this testimony "of the Spirit in himself!" Preachers, by their discourses, and from the holy armour taken from that divine Word, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," may wound the consciences of men. A sense of sin, and the dread of God's wrath, may occasion a *noise* and *shaking* in the hearers, similar to the effects of the prophet's prophesying in the valley. Nay, it may go further; it may awaken greater attention to outward forms of religion; more constant application to the means; more careful endeavours after moral duties; like the *sinews*, and the *flesh*, and the *skin*, forming a covering to the bones. But all these are not the covering of the Lord's Spirit. Until the breath of the Lord breathed upon them, there was no life in them. Nothing short of this therefore can be sufficient for the purpose of a sinner's "passing from death unto life," and "putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Oh! that the churches of Christ may more and more find such testimonies among them, and "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, may be multiplied." (Acts ix. 31.)

that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified," (John vii. 38, 39.) To collect all the passages which are to the same amount in the various writings of the prophets, would be to fill many pages with quotations. I can only speak of them, therefore, with a general reference, and their completion will appear with abundant evidence in the progress of this discourse.

Assuming, then, for granted, what seems to be unquestionable, that the prophets of distant ages, in their writings, spoke of those things, and that the great and Holy Spirit, who guided the prophets' pens, in the predictions he inspired them to publish concerning himself, could not be supposed to suffer any thing of error, or void of meaning, to mingle with their sacred documents; I have only to shew the correspondence of the prophecy with the event: and from the testimony of facts in such an unity of evidence, brought together from periods so remote from each other, to confirm the certainty of the great doctrine itself.

It might indeed be expected, (and, according to the order which I have hitherto observed, in treating of the blessed Spirit's operations, it would now meet us in this place,) that the more peculiar instances of his divine agency should not be passed over unnoticed, which he wrought upon the person of Jesus. The human nature of our Lord was a subject on which the exertions of his almighty power were necessarily exercised. And these, no doubt, are the highest of all proofs of the GODHEAD of his person, and such as distinguish the very exalted dignity of his character in the scale of being. But of all the parts of our subject, this becomes the most difficult. It far exceeds, indeed, the power of man to speak of it as it ought, if possible, to be represented. It is enveloped in so thick a cloud, that the human eye cannot penetrate it. That the miraculous conception of Jesus

was effected by the power of the Holy Ghost, is a truth to which the Scripture gives a direct testimony.* That the sanctification of the human nature of our Lord was no less the result of his divine work, we are equally authorised to assert. But with respect to the mode of operation, how these and the like mysterious events were accomplished; how "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost," (Acts x. 38:) by what means the "Spirit was upon him," (Luke iv. 18,) and "given to him without measure," (John iii. 34:) how in that great oblation of Jesus on the cross, which Christ himself declared, was a free and voluntary act of his own, that "no man took his life from him, but he had power to lay it down and power to take it again," (John x. 18;) while yet it is said, to be an offering "through the Eternal Spirit,"

* The angel, in his annunciation to the Virgin Mary, declared, that this supernatural impregnation should be the immediate effect of the blessed Spirit's agency. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God," (Luke i. 35.) It is worthy our observation, that the same community of acts in the sacred Three, in the economy of human redemption, which hath been so frequently noticed in the course of this work, is in this instance also particularly preserved. In the text just noticed, the miraculous conception is ascribed to the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. In another part of the divine Word we read, that the human nature of Christ was assumed by the blessed Redeemer himself. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *he* also *himself* likewise *took* part of the same," (Heb. ii. 14.) And again; "For verily *he took* not on him the nature of angels, but *he took* on him the seed of Abraham," (v. 16.) In both which places our Lord's assumption of human nature is declared to be his own deed, and the express effect of his own deliberate and free choice. Whilst in another part of Scripture we read that Christ refers the whole into the immediate appointment and operation of the Father. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast *thou* prepared me," (Heb. x. 5.) And what is the unavoidable conclusion that must be drawn from this comparative view of Scripture, but what hath been already and repeatedly observed upon similar passages which have been produced in proof of the same doctrine; that there is and must be a plurality of persons in the Godhead, to give consistency to the divine Word; at the same time, all the parts concur in the certain assurance, that this plurality exists in an indivisibility of essence.

(Heb. ix. 14:) as also in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is at once referred to the effect of his own personal power, (John x. 18;) to the power of the Father, (Acts ii. 14;) and no less to the operation of the Holy Ghost, (1 Pet. iii. 18:) how these ascriptions of the same act, to the several persons constituting the GODHEAD, are to be accounted for in terms which come within the clear apprehension of the human mind, I presume not to say. There are mysteries certainly which can only be contemplated, not explained. They excite indeed our admiration; they call up our reverence; and they awaken in minds, duly impressed with a sense of the infinite greatness of God, and the humble state of man, proper and becoming sentiments of veneration, humility, and faith: but they serve to convince most sensibly, that any, and every subject, which has a relation to the Divinity, is in its nature incomprehensible, and does not come within the grasp of the human intellect, in the present imperfect state of being.

It is sufficient to all the purposes intended, and to the great ends of our spiritual improvement in this life, that we are enabled to demonstrate the certainty of the agency of the blessed Spirit, by the events which are revealed, and from the effects which appear. And when with the common operations of his grace, we discover the more peculiar influences of his ministry, exercised upon the person of our Lord: that the miraculous incarnation of the one was the immediate consequence of the overshadowing the pure Virgin by the other: the acts in the ministry of the former consecrated by the anointing of the latter: the miracles of Christ the effects of the power of the Spirit: and in short, that all the acts of the life of Jesus in his human nature, were sanctified by the agency of the same Spirit: let it be shewn what higher evidences could be given than these in proof of the blessed Spirit's operations. And though it baffles all the faculties of man to conceive how Jesus should

derive sanctity, who was himself immaculate, and to what purpose the several effects of the blessed Spirit's ministry were wrought upon him; yet, if the facts themselves be attested by an authority which cannot be doubted, it is our duty to receive, with implicit faith, what inspiration has condescended to relate on this mysterious subject; without demanding reasons, either for the necessity of the measure, or explanation of the method by which it was accomplished.

But I retire from the contemplation of a topic so awful with the most profound reverence, to attend to such revelations of the agency of the Holy Ghost, as are more commensurate to our understanding. In the review of the plainer manifestations of his grace, as they respect his operations on our nature, we shall find an ample scope for awakening the most devout affections. And though under every possible idea, in which we humbly examine into the ways and works of a Being so infinitely great and incomprehensible, the subject cannot but be attended with much difficulty in the apprehension; yet, in those instances, where he has been graciously pleased to reveal himself somewhat more openly, in the effects which indicate his operation, we may discern the evident traces of his ministry. And here it is, indeed, that we are more immediately called upon to direct our researches, because here we are principally interested in the discovery.

It has been shewn from the general testimony of the prophets, that some great event was foretold, which should take place in the latter days in the church of God, from the "pouring out of the Spirit." And the completion of this prophecy, whether considered in the greater and more open manifestations of it, shed on the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, to qualify them for the work of their ministry; or whether, in the less and more private instances, given to believers in every age of the church, for their own personal sancti-

fication; in either point of view, or in both, a very extensive subject will be found to open for tracing the operations of the Holy Ghost, sufficient to excite the noblest powers, and to reward the closest attention, of mankind.

That I may bring it, however, within the narrowest compass possible, I shall pass over all inquiries respecting the agency of the blessed Spirit during the season of our Lord's continuance upon earth. For notwithstanding a great variety of the manifestations of his grace, is evidently to be seen in that period in which he bore witness, both to the mission of Jesus and to the ministry of his apostles; yet, to notice every circumstance of this nature, would make our subject too diffuse. And though, no doubt, this testimony is in itself highly important in proof of the certainty of his operation, yet the time all along predicted, when it should be displayed by him in a more eminent manner, was the season when Christ should have finished his labours and have returned to his Father. A manifestation this, so infinitely surpassing all preceding ones, both in greatness and in manner, that, comparatively speaking, every former testimony he had given was reputed to be as nothing in the review of it: for it is said by the evangelist, that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified," (John vii. 39.)

It is to this period, therefore, that we must direct our attention, in order to discover the more open and illustrious evidences of the agency of the blessed Spirit. Christ had prepared the minds of his disciples for the reception of the Holy Ghost, in that farewell conference he held with them the night before his passion. Every part of his own personal ministry, except the concluding scene of it, his oblation on the cross, was now accomplished. He had instructed them, so far as they were then competent to learn, in all the important events for which he came into the world. And respecting such

circumstances in the great scheme of salvation, as, from the dulness of their understanding, they could not apprehend, or from the strength of their prejudices they were unable to bear, Jesus referred them for further information to *His* future teachings, whom he would send unto them from the Father; who was "to guide them into all truth," and "bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had taught them." By this plain and familiar declaration, and by a minute description, both of the character and agency of the Holy Ghost, the divine Redeemer awakened the expectation of his disciples to this great event. And, as if all this was not sufficient, after his resurrection, when giving them his final commission, respecting all the interesting concerns of his church, he once more renewed the impression upon their minds, by a revival of the subject; and, now in the very moment of his ascension, he roused their attention to the auspicious advent of the Holy Ghost, by intimating that his approach was at hand. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," (Luke xxiv. 49.)

From this era we take up the history of the Holy Ghost's mission, when God began to fulfil that gracious promise of "pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh." And this is the period from whence we date the commencement of the most illustrious events which ever distinguished the annals of mankind.

The glorious evidences and effects of the first descent of the Holy Ghost, on that ever-memorable day of Pentecost, when the poor timid disciples of Jesus were assembled together to celebrate this Jewish feast, are too well known to require any detail. And, indeed, they are related with that beautiful simplicity and plainness by the sacred historian, as matters of fact usually are, without the studied labour of words or pomp of description, that it is with much pleasure I refer to the account

itself, as being infinitely more calculated to impress the mind with a just sense of the solemn events there recorded, than any heightening of representation which could be given to it, (see Acts ii.) What is more to my present purpose will be, to observe the very important ends which such an illustrious attestation of the work of the Spirit was designed to answer.

The church was now to be converted by a gradual and progressive influence, to the faith of a crucified Redeemer. The hour was come, when that *stone*, which the prophet saw "cut out without hands," was now to swell in bulk, until "it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth," (Dan. ii. 34, 35.) And the instruments chosen to bring about this vast and arduous event, were the humble and despised fishermen of Galilee. In them we behold God committing the sacred designs of the kingdom of his Son, to an handful of the most ignorant and illiterate of men! To qualify them for an execution of a commission so important, certainly required supernatural endowments and powers: and, therefore, the imparting these gifts unto them, and in a manner which might overawe and command attention, was among the first great objects designed in the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. And let the imagination take its utmost scope, to find, if it can, any circumstances which could more powerfully induce these effects, than what the sacred historian hath related, in the miraculous events of that day!*

* It ought to be observed, in addition to this first and most plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, that there appears to have been *four* other seasons of his manifestation in an open manner, though not attended with equal marks of awfulness and splendour. That mentioned in the fourth chapter of the Acts, when the apostles Peter and John had been brought before the Sanhedrim; that in the case of *Saul* at his conversion, (Acts ix. 17;) that of *Cornelius* and his company, (Acts x. 44;) and that on the *Gentiles* at *Antioch* and *Pisidia*, (Acts xiii. 52.) These are all so many distinct and peculiar cases, in which there seems to have been some more open manifestations of his divine presence. The one, respecting the apostles Peter and John being

But how is the mind carried to the highest pitch of dmiration, in the contemplation of that wonderful prousion, and rich variety of spiritual endowments, which he great Saviour of the world sent down upon his depised apostles, when he "had ascended up on high, nd led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men!" Ephes. iv. 8.) Surely, this is an evidence which brings vith it the fullest proof of the most consummate wisdom n the contrivance, and at the same time admirably displays with what unremitting attention the divine Author of our faith continued to preside over the interests of his church. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," (Ephes. iv. 11, 12.)

The apostle Paul, in one of his Epistles to the Corinthians, hath enumerated *nine* distinct gifts of the Spirit, which immediately followed the mission of the Holy Ghost. "To one (he says) is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another faith by the same

summoned before the Sanhedrim, is very remarkable. They had healed a cripple at the gate of the temple, and in their preaching referred the glory of this miracle to the sole authority and power of Jesus. Their persecutors were enraged at this, so that the apostles were first put into prison, and afterwards arraigned before the Jewish council: and when they had been severely reprimanded, they were dismissed with threatenings, if they persisted in preaching any more in the name of Jesus. Being, no doubt, under considerable apprehensions from those threats of the Sanhedrim; which, as it was the highest court of justice, both in civil and religious matters, and held in great veneration by all the people, must have had the more sensible effect upon the timid apostles; they had recourse to that common refuge of *prayer*, which is so forcibly enjoined the Lord's people upon every occasion of trial or distress. In testimony that their prayers were heard, those sensible demonstrations were vouchsafed them. "The place was shaken" where they were assembled together; and the consequence was the same, which, though in less degree, will always attend the earnest supplications of the faithful. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness," (Acts iv. 31.)

Spirit. To another the gift of healing by the same Spirit. To another the working of miracles. To another prophecy. To another discerning of spirits. To another divers kinds of tongues. To another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10, 11.) To enter into a circumstantial relation of these gifts of the Holy Spirit, in shewing their nature and design, and in following the steps of the apostles in their use and application of them, as exemplified in the course of their ministry, would be to furnish an historical account of the Christian church, during the apostolic age; and to open a very wide subject, which, however gratifying it might prove, would be a departure from the immediate object which I must keep in view. It will be sufficient to our purpose to observe, that every donation of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, had a direct tendency to answer some more especial design in the establishment of the Gospel; and thereby to afford the fullest demonstration, that it was God speaking in them, and by them, in the very powerful testimonies he gave to the truth of their commission.

For example: "The word of wisdom," (which St. Paul ranks in the very first class of the gifts of the Spirit, and which perhaps is the most eminent in the list,) by which I apprehend is meant a perfect knowledge of all the great mysteries of the gospel: as nothing could be more important in itself, so no property could be more essential, to qualify the apostles for the sacred service to which they were now appointed. That they were altogether ignorant before this event took place of the real character of their Lord, and of the great purposes he came to accomplish, the smallest attention to the writings of the Evangelists is sufficient to prove. For notwithstanding all the interesting discourses of Jesus, on the sublime topic of his mission, during his

bode with them, accompanied as they frequently were ith every demonstration of GODHEAD, it appears by eir confession, that their confidence in him only mounted to an hope, which his crucifixion soon dis-elled, that it *might* have been "he who should have edeemed Israel." (Luke xxiv. 21.) And so rivetted ere they in the Jewish notions of a temporal Messiah, nd so unwilling to receive him under any other charac-er, that their most earnest inquiries were, respecting the *ime* when he would assume this dominion. Nay even fter his resurrection from the grave, and during the eriod of the forty days that he conversed with them, 'concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" the subject which still continued uppermost in heir thoughts, produced the same anxious question, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.) From all these palpable truths, nd from the general traits in the character of the apos-les, it is more than probable that, very shortly after the scension of Jesus, if the Holy Ghost had not come, hey would have returned to their former occupations, egardless of every thing which had happened. The and of time, which effaces all impressions not deeply ormed, would have worn away every remembrance of what Jesus had taught them, and of the kingdom which ad so long soothed the vanity of their hearts, with the ond hopes of attaining. It is possible indeed the recol-ection of their dear Lord, his wonderful works of mercy nd love, the gentleness and affability of his character, nd more especially his kindness towards them, might requently have crossed their minds; and like the af-ecting incidents in the history of a person or family, in whose concerns the heart feels interested, now and then, t would have called forth the tear and the sigh. But more than this it was unlikely to have produced. Every race respecting the great things which he had taught them, would have been washed from their memory in

the stream of forgetfulness. When therefore, in the descent of the Holy Ghost, they were "endued with power from on high," from that moment, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) And from being perfectly instructed themselves, "in the word of wisdom," they were at once qualified to teach others also. "We speak (says one of them, in behalf of himself and his brethren in the ministry,) the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory," (1 Cor. ii. 7:) "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit," (Ephes. iii. 5.)

Much to the same amount is the *second* gift of the Spirit named in the list, "the word of knowledge;" and similar observations arise from the review of it, to shew its aptness and utility to the apostolic character. The word of knowledge, it should seem, implied the clear apprehension of the Jewish Scriptures, and perhaps was distinguishable from the word of wisdom only in this particular. How very requisite such a qualification became for the work of the ministry, is obvious from the smallest consideration; for it could be by arguments drawn from that source only, that the *Jew* was to be converted from his bigotry, and the *Gentile* from his false wisdom. And while the commission of the apostles taught them to throw open the door of salvation for the *latter*, nothing less than an appeal to his own Scriptures, for the authority of such a measure, could carry conviction to the breast of the *former*, that one and the same Sun of Righteousness was to be "the light of the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of his people Israel."*

* Though the illuminating power of the Divine Spirit so eminently qualified the apostles for the work of the ministry in this "word of

The same train of reasoning might be applied to every other grace of the Holy Spirit, shed on the apos-

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knowledge; yet a remarkable instance of their deficiency in apprehending the sense of Scripture occurs in their history after the day of Pentecost. Probably not without a design in God, to intimate to believers thereby, a lesson of grace and humility, in shewing that the largest gifts of the Holy Spirit do not supersede the necessity of further supplies; but our application must be as continual as our wants are daily. The deficiency of apprehension to which I allude, is respecting the kingdom of grace being intended also to the Gentiles. The concurrent language of the prophetic writings, and the instruction of Jesus upon the same subject, all led to the assurance, that in the days of the Messiah, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, the Lord's name should be great among the Gentiles:" and that "in every place incense should be offered unto his name and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts," (Mal. i. 11.) And the prophecy of Simeon was express to the same purpose, that Christ should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." And our Lord's final commission immediately led to the expectation of it: "to go into all nations *and* to preach the gospel to every creature." And the descent of the Holy Ghost, in one of its very first effects, was to qualify the disciples for becoming witnesses to Jesus, not only in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, but "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," (Acts i. 8.) These circumstances, one should have thought, would have prepared the minds of the apostles, after the mission of the Holy Ghost had taken place, to have seen the intention of God in opening the door of salvation unto the Gentiles. But notwithstanding all this, it appears from the history of the apostles, they were none of them apprehensive of those things. Nay, what is yet much more remarkable, though Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost actually quoted the words of the prophet Joel to this purpose, that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit upon *all flesh;* yet so little disposed was he to accept the expression in this comprehensive sense, that in the instance of Cornelius, a period of several years after, and though taught by a vision also that what God had cleansed man should no longer call common; (meaning that the fence of separation between the Jew and the Gentile was now taken down in one common salvation:) yet still the apostle could not for a long time reconcile to himself the persuasion, that the Lord intended the conversion of the heathen world. And even when, in obedience to the heavenly command, he had visited Cornelius; had preached to him; seen the effects of his preaching, in the Holy Ghost falling upon the honest centurion, and all that heard the word; and in consequence of it, had baptized them in the name of the Lord, being now fully convinced in his own mind, that "God had granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life;" yet all this did not operate sufficiently among his brethren to induce an hearty and cheerful reception of the doctrine. Peter indeed, when called upon to give an account of this transaction before the college of apostles at Jerusalem, fully

tles, to qualify them for their ministry; since we cannot but conclude, that every gift had some peculiar purpose for which it was imparted, and that occasions for the exercise of it were continually occurring in the course of their labours. But the limits I must observe, confine me to a more general comprehension of the subject than is compatible with a particular illustration. The effects proceeding from the two eminent properties which I have endeavoured to explain, "the word of wisdom," and "the word of knowledge," render it no very difficult matter to apprehend, that the same or similar happy consequences resulted from all. Without doubt, every situation or occasion to which the apostolic office might lead, was amply provided for in one or other of those gifts of the Holy Spirit. That *faith*, by which (to use the bold metaphor of the apostle) mountains were removed, if they obstructed the path of duty; those *gifts of healing*, which powerfully demonstrated the commission they bore for the cure of the soul, while dispensing acts of mercy to the body; the *miracles*, which became

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justified his conduct and satisfied them: but it was some time after before the full propagation of the gospel took place, and not until Paul and Barnabas were sent out by a special commission from the Holy Ghost for that purpose, (Acts xiii. 2.)

I have introduced this note, not so much by way of remarking the circumstance of the apostles' want of apprehension concerning the will of God in the call of the Gentile world, as with a view to raise a spiritual improvement from it, which may be rendered extremely beneficial to the Lord's people. For if the apostles themselves, after receiving the *extraordinary* manifestations of the Holy Ghost, had not a complete clearness of understanding in all things; but even in a matter which concerned their apostolic office, they needed further illumination; how should it teach those to whom the *ordinary* gifts only of the Spirit are dispensed to be continually seeking for more instruction, that they may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!" The light of the Spirit imparted to the believer, is supposed to be in a state of progression, and from "the day-dawn and the day-star" which ariseth in the heart, is shining more and more unto a perfect day. For "if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Give us then, blessed Lord, *daily* grace as thou givest us "our daily bread:" that "having this *spiritual* nourishment ministered, we may increase with the increase of God."

an indelible seal to the truth of the faith; the *prophecy*, which enabled them to foresee and provide for the future events of the church; the *discerning of Spirits*, by which false teachers were detected and true ones appointed; the gift of *tongues*, and the *interpretation of tongues*, becoming the most incontrovertible *signs to them that believe not*, and qualifying the apostles to accommodate themselves to the apprehension of every creature to whom they spake on the great topics of the gospel:* all and every one of these miraculous gifts were the immediate consequence of the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and became so many peculiar attestations to the seal of their apostleship, in the daily exercise of which "God bore them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on them abundantly." And these were all given, not for their own personal aggrandizement or sanctification, but "for the perfecting of the

* There is a beautiful analogy discernible in all the parts of the Divine Government, by those who will attentively trace the operations of God under the different dispensations vouchsafed mankind. In the gift of tongues, this is peculiarly striking. When the "whole earth was of one language and of one speech," there can be no doubt but this was intended as a blessing to the world. For not only an happier communication of thoughts and sentiments was thereby preserved for the purposes of social life; but an universal language became also the best preservative of the knowledge of God. But when the corruptions of the human heart had perverted this blessing, and their ungodly consultation had projected the Tower of Babel, most probably, as it should seem, for the purpose of idolatry, God was pleased to confound the language by the introduction of a variety of tongues; and taking care, at the same time, for the preservation of the sacred original in the person of Shem and his family, that the knowledge of Jehovah should be kept alive in the earth, the Lord gave up the remainder to pursue the idolatry of their hearts. How admirably does the religion of Jesus begin with a remedy for this evil, in qualifying the ambassadors of it with the gift of tongues for the execution of their office. That as the diversity of languages arose from the apostacy of mankind, so their recovery might be effected through the instrumentality of the same, and an additional and miraculous attestation be therefore afforded also to the truth of the gospel, by which the "nations then afar off might be brought nigh through the blood of Christ."

saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

But glorious as these manifestations of the blessed Spirit's ministry were on the minds of the apostles, had these been all the effects intended by his mission, wretched still would have been the condition of mankind respecting it! The world might have heard and admired the doctrine of salvation, and gazed with rapture on the beneficent miracles which the apostles wrought, in confirmation of it, but no converts could have been made by their preaching. The *dry bones* in the valley, under all the prophesying of the prophet, though divinely commissioned, had no breath in them, until the Spirit of the Lord *himself* caused them to live. To accomplish this, therefore, another thing intended by the descent of the Holy Ghost, equally important, though not attended with equal splendour, (and to which, indeed, the operation wrought on the apostles was but subsidiary,) had a reference to mankind. The more copious effusions of the blessed Spirit became requisite, to enable *them* to preach the gospel; but the disposing the mind of man to receive and cherish the great truths which they taught, in opposition to all the corruptions of the human heart, and all the other difficulties which obstructed their way, required no less the aids of grace among those for whose conversion the apostles laboured.

In order to illustrate this doctrine more fully, it will not be needful to enter into a minute detail of the state of the world respecting religion, in the season the Holy Ghost assumed his more peculiar ministry. I shall not call upon you to consider the prejudice of the Jew, nor the corruption of the Gentile. Neither the Pharisaic pride, nor the Sadducean scepticism, are the topics on which my subject will render it necessary for me to enlarge. I shall beg you only to consider human nature, universally as it is now, as it was then, and has been, in all ages; and then ask your own heart, whether in the

belief of the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer (which human reason, untaught by a higher principle, cannot digest,) somewhat more than the merely cold conviction of the understanding must not have operated, to gain the warm and zealous approbation of the heart? Will any man suffer himself to be prejudiced enough to suppose, that the mere *external* miracles, wrought at the feast of Pentecost, were the whole efficient cause in producing the wonderful events of that day? The gift of tongues, which is the most considerable we read of, conferred on the apostles at that time, could have no very powerful effect in the conversion of their countrymen, the people of Judea; because, from the ignorance of the major part of them in foreign languages, the evidence to the truth of Jesus derived from it, could only be assured to them from the testimony of others. And with respect to miracles, there are none mentioned to have been performed by the apostles on that day. Indeed, had there been any, it is not very probable that the Jews, who had been so long in the habit of beholding with indifference the mighty works of Jesus, would have regarded those of his servants. "If they had called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more would they call them of his household." With these palpable facts, then, in view, when we are told that three thousand souls were, on that ever-memorable day, converted to the faith of the gospel through the instrumentality of the apostles' preaching, what are we to conclude to have been the efficient cause of such a miracle? Three thousand! pause a moment, and reflect on the number. Not one, or five, or fifty, or an hundred, but three thousand. And probably some of them the very characters amongst the clamorous rabble, which but a little before had demanded the crucifixion of Jesus. Could mere *outward* causes only, however accompanied with the fullest demonstration of power in the apostles, have produced such a change in the heart? Must there

not have been some predisposing cause operating *within* also on the minds of the converts, to have given such efficacy to the apostle's preaching? Will any man be bold enough to admit the fact, and yet deny the cause? Is it possible to believe that such an host of Jerusalem sinners should suddenly be converted to the faith, which before they had so violently reprobated and opposed, and immediately become the disciples of Him, who from the universal odium of his name and cross, had been literally proved to be what the prophet had long before described him; "the Holy One whom man despiseth, Him whom the nation abhorreth," (Isa. xlix. 7;) and not barely to acknowledging such a character for their Lord; but to sacrifice ease, and wealth, and reputation, exposing themselves to the derision and scorn of their countrymen, and embarking in a cause which led to certain suffering, and probably to death: could such effects, I say, have been induced from any causes merely *external*, unless some *inward* power, co-operating at the same time, had wrought the accomplishment thereof? And yet this was literally the case with every believer converted to the gospel on that day; and "who continued (we are told) stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer," (Acts ii. 42.)

I think this argument, plain and simple as it is, (and plain and simple I wish it to be, in order to stop, if possible, the subterfuge of sophistry,) enough to convince any candid person, that the mission of the Holy Ghost was not limited in its operation to the apostles; but the efficacy of it was imparted also, at the same time, to every one of the multitude, which are mentioned as having "gladly received the word, and being baptized," (Acts ii. 41.)

And if such effects prove that the ministry of the blessed Spirit was evidently exercised upon the men of Judea and Jerusalem, surely, wherever a single pro-

selyte was made to the Christian name in the world at large, such a single instance carries with it a demonstration of his power perfectly irresistible. If we look with astonishment at the poor fishermen of Galilee, going in and out among the great doctors of the Jewish law, and making converts to the doctrine of the cross in the very face of the Sanhedrim, and in defiance of every opposition; how must our wonder increase, when in the general dispersion of the apostles, after the persecution raised against them on the death of Stephen; we behold those humble and despised men embarking upon the dangerous, and, to human apprehension, most romantic enterprise, converting the world to the faith of Jesus! I need not describe the state of the heathen mythology, nor the deplorable situation of mankind in all points of religion and morality, when the disciples of Jesus went forth to preach the gospel to every creature. It will give the most lively idea of the universal corruption and depravity which prevailed, if we only attend to what the apostle Paul hath said of those nations, even where the arts and sciences flourished in the greatest perfection: "They had changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness," (Rom. i. 23, 24.)

It was to such characters the gospel was addressed. Figure then to yourself either of the apostles opening his commission to an audience of this kind. Fancy, for instance, that you behold the apostle Paul haranguing the men of Athens upon the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. Let his sermon be clothed in whatever garb the most insinuating and masterly preacher could devise, yet still the prominent features which mark the Christian character must have been preserved and appeared, in order to answer the purposes of his commission. Conceive, then, the universal disgust, and

contempt, and derision, with which the preacher was received, when not content with reprobating the "idolatry to which that city was wholly given," (Acts xvii. 16,) he called upon them also to accept of Jesus of Nazareth, who had died as a malefactor upon the cross, for their Lord and Saviour! That the apostle never concealed the poverty of his Master's life, or the ignominy of his death, is evident from the general tenor of his discourses left on record. He, who before the learned audience at Rome professed himself "not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ," knowing it "to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed," (Rom. i. 16:) and to the Corinthian and Galatian churches, declares his determination to know nothing among them, but "Jesus Christ and him crucified," (1 Cor. ii. 2:) that this cross was his glory; nay, speaking with a kind of abhorrence of taking pride in any thing besides, he says, "God forbid, that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" (Gal. vi. 14.) Can it be supposed that the apostle omitted this grand topic in the *continued* discourses which we are told he held *daily* with the Athenians? (Acts xvii. 17.) Whatever general subjects of the gospel he might insist on, we may very safely venture to conclude, that as he determined to know nothing among the Corinthian converts but "Jesus Christ and him crucified," so that was the leading point of every sermon. And how shall we account for the reception of a faith so highly offensive to the pride of life? Can we really think that the apostle's preaching was the sole cause? Was there no principle within, operating at the same time to give efficacy to the word? And is it not reasonable to imagine, that He who gave the apostle eloquence to speak, gave also no less the hearing ear to them which received the word, to the comfort of their souls? Surely no one can suppose that such effects as followed the apostle's preaching should have taken place, even in a single instance, unless sent

home to the heart of every individual, by Him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," (Ephes. i. 11.)

Neither was the doctrine of the cross the only offensive point in the system of the religion of Jesus. The apostles enjoined their followers to "turn from every vanity, and to serve the living and true God," (Acts xiv. 15.) No irregular practice, no wrong action or word could be countenanced by the gospel. It could not connive at the smallest vice, nor permit the gratification of a single sin, but without exception condemned all. While, on the contrary, every virtue which could be thought of or named, was commanded to be strictly attended to. Its universal precept was expressed in that comprehensive sentence, "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report," the Christian was expected "to think on, and do these things," (Philip. iv. 8.) We cannot wonder, therefore, when we read that "the philosophers of the sect of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered the apostle Paul at Athens," (Acts xvii. 18.) But it excites our utmost surprise that he should ever have proselyted any to his doctrine and practice, from such corrupt nations of the earth. And yet we know, that in a very short period, the gospel, in the hands of those feeble instruments, went forth "conquering and to conquer." It baffled all opposition, and with a rapidity incredible, the church of Christ was established throughout the world, against which "the gates of hell could never prevail." The apostle Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians about thirty years after the ascension of Christ. And in this he tells his converts, that the gospel was "now come unto them, as it was in all the world," (Coloss. i. 6;) that is, he meant all the then known world, the Roman empire and its provinces. What an astonishing idea of the prevalence of Christianity! Astonishing, indeed, in every point of view; but impossible,

had the *whole* work been theirs, who were the *outward* instruments of it: but when we recognize that divine Spirit, by whose *inward* illumination its completion was effected, our astonishment terminates in a devout adoration of "the wonderful works of God."

I flatter myself that these considerations will be sufficient to procure your unreserved belief (which I am exceedingly desirous to obtain) of the doctrine of the blessed Spirit's ministry being exercised, as well upon the minds of believers for their *private* sanctification, as in the more abundant effusions of his grace, which were poured on the apostles for their *public* ministry.

But, perhaps, it may be said, that though these are very satisfying reasons to induce a belief, that the influence of the Holy Spirit on the human mind was not confined to the apostles, yet they do not prove that it extended further than the *apostles' days*. All that has been advanced upon this subject, may very safely be admitted without implying his agency *now*. Nay, the advocates of a contrary opinion will go further, and tell us, that the very proof adduced to shew a co-operation of the inward grace with the outward means, in the conversion of the early Christians, becomes the best argument in testimony of its discontinuance. And since it is universally agreed, that external miracles ceased when the spirit of heathenism evaporated, and the gospel was generally established; it should seem to intimate that all internal assistance also, was at the same time done away, and became no longer necessary.

I will grant to this argument every thing which can be made of it. I shall with pleasure confess, that a very sensible alteration has taken place, both in the circumstances of mankind, and in the complexion of Christianity between the days of the apostles and the present hour. "Kings are" now literally become to the church "her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers," (Isa. xlix. 23.) The cross of Jesus is held in the

highest honour, and esteemed most sacred. It has been often made the banner of victory to the soldier, as well as the sign of glory to the saint. And so far is the outward profession of the faith from being attended with danger or reproach, that no greater obloquy can be thrown upon any character than to say of him, He is not a Christian.

Though these circumstances are evidently in favour of our holy faith, and therefore have superseded the necessity of any further miracles for its establishment in the world; yet still I contend, (and with all the warmth and strength of argument of one who contends, both for a most important concern and for the plainest matter of fact,) that the *inward* operation of the Holy Ghost is equally carried on in the present moment in the heart of the true believer, as in former ages. Nay, so far hath his influence been from having ceased, or become unimportant, that its absolute necessity is but the more increased in the absence of those outward attractions, with which the word of God was then accompanied. And, indeed, for the purposes of a real conversion of the heart to God, distinguished from that nominal profession which the free and unmolested exercise of religion is too apt to produce, there can be no true faith, but that which proceedeth from the operation of the Holy Spirit.

As this is by far the most interesting part of our subject, it well merits a more particular investigation.

In all ages man by nature is the same. The Holy Scripture, in all its doctrines, is perpetually inculcating the melancholy truth of our fallen state. We are said to be so lost and depraved, that of ourselves we have not ability to do any thing towards our own recovery: our faculties are so impaired, our powers so corrupted, and our whole mind enfeebled. And what, if possible, is still worse, we are so far advanced in disease as to be insensible of it; so habituated by nature to the captivity

of sin, that we feel not the chain. Hence, in the midst of daily infirmities and sins, nothing is more common than to hear men boasting of their moral excellence, and like the proud Pharisee in the parable, thank God "they are not as other men are."

And this corruption of the heart, the same unquestionable authority assures us, is accompanied also with another miserable consequence induced by the fall, namely, the blindness of the understanding; by which man not only violates the laws of God, and lives for the most part, either in an unconscious or unconcerned state under it, but is desirous to continue so. He shuts his eyes so resolutely against the truth, and hath by nature such an aversion to divine revelation, that, from mere outward causes only, it is impossible the knowledge of his turpitude should appear to him in its just characters. To use the unequalled words of Christ; "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved," (John iii. 20.) And therefore the apostle Paul expressly declares the unrenewed mind to be so unfavourable to the reception of things sacred, that it cannot admit them. "The natural man (says he) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

I know full well how offensive such doctrines are to the pride of man: for, indeed, they cannot but be offensive, where their truth is not felt and acknowledged. But this only becomes an additional evidence of their certainty. We may refuse our belief thereof, but we cannot disprove facts by the denial of them. And it is a folly, not unlike that of the senseless bird, who fancies her whole body concealed, because she has hidden her head under her wing, when we take shelter from the truth, under any imaginary covering woven from the false reasonings of sophistry.

The same unerring revelation, which hath informed us of the corruption and blindness of our nature, hath communicated to us also the knowledge of the only means of cure, in the ministry and operations of the Holy Ghost. We are there taught that it is his peculiar province, both to heal the disease of the heart, and to open the blind eye. And hence, when the great Redeemer of mankind promised his disciples the aids of this blessed Spirit, the first office which he was to perform, as preparatory to every other, was "to reprove the world of sin," (John xvi. 8.) It is very remarkable, and worthy our particular attention, that this should have been the first operation of the blessed Spirit, to reprove or convince the world of sin. Reason might have supposed that the consciousness of sin was of itself sufficient to have induced the conviction of it. But, no! the eye is veiled by its deceptions, and cannot see the objects clearly. And ignorance of the corruption of the mind is necessarily connected with the disbelief of the value of the merits of the Saviour. So that when the blessed Spirit was promised under this first act of reproving the world of sin, Christ added also the reason of it, "because they believe not on me," (John xvi. 9.) It is, therefore, the Holy Ghost only, which can shake off the film from the eye and hold up the mirror to man, to shew him the features of his deformity, and by awakening in his mind humbling views of the sinner, and giving at the same time proper apprehensions of the Redeemer, to "cast down all imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. x. 5.)

These are the peculiar acts of the Holy Ghost, and without which all the outward means and ministrations of the word must prove ineffectual. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above," (John iii. 27.) "No man (says Christ) can come unto me

except it were given unto him of my Father," (John vi. 65.) And the apostle Paul, to the same purport, declares, that "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. xii. 3.)

And as a further proof of this doctrine, it is happily illustrated to us in scriptural cases. When the apostle Paul had been preaching the word to the Philippians, we are told, that a certain woman, named Lydia, attended "to the things which were spoken of Paul:" and the reason assigned for it is, because "the Lord opened her heart," (Acts xvi. 14.) Here is the most positive proof in point, of the subject before us, which can be desired. Nothing can more accurately discriminate the *outward* ministry of the word from the *inward* efficacy of divine grace. In the instance of this woman's conversion to the faith of the Gospel, they both co-operated to induce it; which indeed must ever be the case, where the divine word becomes profitable to the hearer for the purpose of salvation; but it is plain, that the sacred historian, in the narrative of this event, considered Paul's preaching as rendered efficacious, because "the Lord opened her heart."

The same important truth is most decidedly expressed by the apostle in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. While the Corinthians were more anxious to class themselves under their respective teachers, by whom they were instructed in the great doctrines of religion, than in examining what effect their preaching left upon their hearts, St. Paul endeavours to call them from such unprofitable considerations, to attend to the first and great pre-disposing cause of their Christian belief. He reminds them, that the ministers in the church were but ministers only, and their ministrations the channels by which God conveyed his Holy Spirit to the true believer's heart. They were instruments by which the Lord was pleased to work. "Who then is Paul, (says he) and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye be-

ieved? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," (1 Cor. iii. 5.)

It is impossible that any form of words could have been chosen more happily to convey the apostle's perfect apprehension of the insignificancy of all outward means, void of the inward grace. The figure of *planting* and *watering* is beautifully expressive, to represent the fruitless toil of sowing the spiritual seed, unless the rain, and the dew, and the sun of heaven, shed their genial influence upon it to give it life.

And this accounts to us for the perpetual questions we meet with, both in the apostle's writings and preaching, concerning the gifts of the Spirit. We find him continually asking for this evidence from his converts, of their Christian faith and character. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts xix. 2.) "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," (Rom. viii. 9.) "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God," (Rom. viii. 14.) And he frequently recommends it to every believer, to try and ascertain the truth and reality of his faith, by this infallible standard. "Examine yourselves, (says he) whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownselves. Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.)

These circumstances are so much in point, and so very fully demonstrate the perpetual influence of the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the heart of man, that I think it almost impossible that any one should deny it.

And yet further in confirmation of the doctrine, we have the concurrent testimony both of Christ and his apostles, who also plainly teach, that his divine operations were intended to be as universal as they are essential and important. In predicting the advent of the

Holy Ghost, Christ declared, that one of his acts would be, "to reprove the world of sin." By the *world*, it is impossible to apprehend any thing *less* than believers in general. It certainly could not mean the apostles only, that were to be reproved of *sin*. For had any characters upon earth been considered worthy of exemption from this reproof, surely the apostles of Jesus would have been the persons. And again, speaking of the disposition in God, to betow the blessing of his grace upon the world in general, our Lord says: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," (Luke xi. 13.) Here also the promise is not limited; but Christ declares, that there is a readiness in God to give the Holy Spirit to *them* that ask him, and which readiness in God can be but barely and imperfectly represented by the solicitude of an earthly parent, to impart good gifts unto his children. And again, in his prayer the night before his passion, after offering up a particular petition for the unity of the Spirit to be with his disciples, he expressly adds a clause, in which he concludes his request, for the same blessing on all believers throughout all ages: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word," (John xvii. 20.) And lastly, to mention no more, when Jesus assured his disciples of the coming of the Holy Ghost, it was that "he should abide with them for ever," (John xiv. 16.) Had this been intended in a peculiar relation to the apostles *only*, surely Christ would have limited the abode of the blessed Spirit to the end of their life, or their ministry, and not have stated it under the term "for ever." For this correspondeth also to what he said of his constant presence with them upon another occasion: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

To the same effect are the testimonies of the apos-

tles concerning the perpetuity of the ministry of the Holy Ghost. The prophets who predicted the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days, (as we have already seen) all expressly taught this doctrine: that the mercy was to be as general as it was great, and as permanent as important. And in conformity to this persuasion, the apostles of Christ taught it in all their writings and discourses. St. Peter, in his animated sermon on the day of Pentecost, not only quoted the words of the prophet Joel, but illustrated the sense of them, in a direct application to the people of that time, and all subsequent generations. "The promise (says he) is to you, and to your children, and to *all* that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," (Acts ii. 39.) And St. Paul is no less express to the same testimony: "Unto every one of us (says he) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," (Ephes. iv. 7.) "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," (Gal. iv. 6.) And the apostle John set it down, as the truest criterion, that the love of God is in the heart, by his indwelling Spirit: "Hereby (says he) we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," (1 John iii. 24.) In short, it would be endless to enumerate all the passages which occur in the writings of the different apostles, in confirmation of the doctrine. Saint Paul's epistles in particular are full of it. He appeals to the Corinthians, in proof of their possessing spiritual gifts, (1 Cor. xii. xiii. xiv.) He reproves the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, and Ephesians, for the pride which they had manifested in the gifts of the Spirit, (See Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xiv.; Gal. iv.; Ephes. iv.) with which they were endued on those occasions, when most wanted. And the common benediction of his, and the epistles of the rest of the apostles, for the communion and grace of the Holy Spirit, to be with

believers, clearly testifies their sentiments, that the blessing was to be general. All these circumstances, therefore, separately and collectively considered, are certainly so many positive and undeniable proofs, that the ministry of the Holy Ghost is taught in Scripture to be a permanent and abiding ministry with the Lord's church in all ages; that it is as much exercised and carried on *now* as it was in the infancy of Christianity: that believers are taught continually to pray for it, and to wait for the blessing: and that wherever any happy effects attend the outward ministry of the word, in raising up true servants to the Lord, and faithful believers in Jesus Christ, we have as strong an evidence and as full authority to conclude as is necessary for our conviction, that the Holy Ghost is the great pre-disposing cause, who hath rendered the outward means effectual, by the inward operation of his grace: and every single instance is as certain a proof of his present agency and power, as the conversion of three thousand, through the instrumentality of Peter's sermon, on the day of Pentecost.

Having now fully answered the purpose intended, in the establishment of the doctrine, I have but one duty remaining to accomplish upon the subject, and which indeed, individually considered, becomes the most interesting of any; and that is, the practical inferences which arise out of it. This is, no doubt, the grand object of the whole, to the attainment of which all the offices of preaching are subservient. But its importance demanding a longer attention than is consistent with the present limits, I must reserve it for the topic of another discussion.

In the mean time, to what hath been already offered, under His divine presence, whose unceasing agency we have been contemplating, and whose gracious blessing, let us humbly hope, hath accompanied our review of it,

I have only to add an earnest supplication, that the same, or similar happy effects, which followed Peter's preaching before Cornelius, may be felt in our present assembly. "While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

SERMON VIII.

ACTS XIX. 2.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

When the subject which hath now been so amply discussed, was first proposed to your consideration, the original design of it was, by an examination of the scriptural evidences, in that great branch of theology, relating to the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, to ascertain the certainty of the doctrine, and thereby to excite, if possible, the careless to a more awakened regard to it; to convince the unbeliever of its truth; and to provide for the stability of its faith in the breast of the weaker Christian. Lamenting, that a topic so infinitely grand in itself, and so important to us in our present fallen state, should be so little regarded, I flattered myself, that it required only to be more generally considered, in order to call up a more animated attention to it. And though perfectly conscious, that the closest application, to this, or any other of the sacred subjects, in the sublime science of religion, could not be in the least available, unless followed by the Divine blessing; yet having entered upon this service with previously imploring the light of heaven to direct my path, and preserving a never-ceasing dependence upon the same gracious help, through every step which has been taken in the way, I have reason to hope, that the mercy requested has not been denied. I have only in conclusion, to lift a grateful eye of acknowledgment, for whatever aid the divine benignity hath afforded, and humbly

to submit the event of the whole, to the determination of Him who ordereth all things in wisdom.

When I review the long train of evidence of the personality, the GODHEAD, and the ministry of the Holy Ghost; the examination of which we have gone over, through both Testaments of Scripture; though the whole, which we are enabled to trace, forms no more than the mere outlines of the subject; I stand amazed in the contemplation, and know not, whether to admire more, the infinite greatness of the Being as he is in Himself, or the infinite humility which he has manifested in his attention towards us. What a marvellous condescension was it in the Son of God, when for the purpose of human redemption, he took upon himself our nature, and submitted to that series of humiliation and suffering, which is related of him in the Gospel, and which excited, as indeed it well might, the desire even of the angels to look into it! But how does the plan of mercy continue to affect us by its sublimity, when we go on to behold the Eternal Spirit directing his attention to the same mysterious purpose! It was not sufficient that the Son of God should redeem mankind by his blood, but also the efficacy of that high oblation must be imparted to every believer's breast, by the operation of the eternal Spirit. In the ministry which he exercised on the minds of men, from the very beginning of the world, by *prophecies*, *visions*, and *miracles*, all preparatory to our Lord's advent, which we trace through the Old Testament; and in the immediate offices of his divine agency, revealed of him under the New, in regenerating our fallen nature, and taking the human heart for his temple: what an astonishing subject does the whole open to the contemplation of the mind of man; and what an awfulness and importance does it give to the scheme of salvation!

From the plain testimonies which have been brought before you, in the course of the observations which have

been made on our present subject, the certainty of these truths, however attended with difficulty in the apprehension, hath, I persuade myself, fully appeared. Whether the evidence adduced may have proved sufficiently satisfactory, so as to obtain the unreserved conviction of the two former classes of persons, whom I had in view in this address; or whether either of those different characters of men may have condescended to attend at all to what hath been advanced, or have accompanied me thus far in the work, I know not. Earnest as I am, that the whole should not be lost upon them, I can do no more, than in an impartial and unimposing manner, offer the proofs of this great doctrine, as they arise from Scripture, to their consideration, and pray, that they may be rendered effectual to the purpose intended, under the Divine blessing. To propose fair reason and argument, and to entreat a candid attention, are all that, upon such occasions, belong to the duties of man. To fasten conviction on the heart, is the province of God. And we have authority to conclude, that where a due regard to this first and pre-disposing cause of all, is kept up in the mind upon all subjects of doubtful nature, the humblest endeavours of human means become sufficient to bring about the purposes of the Divine will. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant," (Psalm xxv. 14.) But where this is wanting, the most powerful evidences lose their efficacy of persuasion. The vineyard, of which we read, though planted with the choicest vine, and situated on the most fruitful hill, and altogether in the highest state of cultivation, yet brought forth no fruit; because, after long expectation in vain of its produce, under all the advantages which it possessed, the clouds were at length commanded to "rain no rain upon it," (Isaiah v. 1—6.)

But whatever the event shall be to the *inattentive*, or to the *unbeliever*, I would fain persuade myself, that

the *humble Christian* hath received, under Divine assistance, the most ample satisfaction as to the truth of the doctrine, from the evidence which hath been produced. And having his understanding convinced, he is anxious to be led on to the inward conviction of the same, and to the practical effects resulting therefrom. Once convinced, that the efficient ministry of the blessed Spirit is exercised in the hearts of all true believers, to the great purposes of salvation; it is impossible to be indifferent or unconcerned in the examination of the personal interest which every man has in it. For however satisfied he may be, of the agency of the Holy Ghost, generally considered, and that it is by his operations that the Redeemer's merits are applied to the sinner's necessities; yet, if he hath no evidence of such effects in his own heart, how great and important soever the doctrine may be in itself (with reverence be it spoken) it ceases to be so to him. All knowledge upon this interesting topic, which terminates not in the personal application of it to a man's own bosom, is merely speculative: the being preached to, or reasoned with by a chain of arguments, which end in the hearing of the ear, and pass away from the mind almost as soon as heard, are as impressions made on the water. It is not worth the labour of a single sermon, to produce no better effect than this. And fruitless, indeed, is all the attention which is given, either to the animating subject of the great Redeemer's love, or to the pleasing consideration of the ministry of the blessed Spirit in the hearts of believers, unless a man can add to both the comfortable assurance that he is himself interested in the mercies he contemplates, and will ultimately participate in the blessings resulting from them. But when the serious Christian is led to know and feel his own personal concern therein, is convinced that Christ not only died for sin, but for *his* sin, and that the operations of the Holy Ghost are carried on, not in the world only, but in *his heart* also; the subject

then becomes infinitely interesting, and the mind is gratified with the highest of all possible enjoyments in the possession of that testimony, which the apostle speaks of with so much rapture, when " the Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God," (Romans viii. 16.)

As this is, or ought to be, the great *desideratum* of every man's heart, to the attainment of which the several means of grace are directed, and all the institutions of religion minister, I hope I shall be doing no unacceptable service, if my endeavours are exerted in assisting the serious Christian towards the accomplishment of it. The subject itself is interesting, and as it leads to the examination of the heart, for the traces of the blessed Spirit's ministry, it will form a very proper sequel to these discourses, and, under the Divine blessing, enable any man to satisfy himself on the important question in the text, which the apostle seems to have considered as the truest criterion of a right faith; " Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

Before I enter upon the subject, I would beg leave to premise, that what I shall offer, must necessarily be limited to general observations. In the numberless instances by which the efficient means of grace are manifested, I do not presume to describe the exact manner in which the work of the Holy Spirit is conducted in the soul of man. God is a sovereign agent, whose operations are neither confined to mode, nor circumscribed by form. In all his gracious dealings with his creatures, he acts in what way, and in what manner, is agreeable to his infinite wisdom. And no doubt, the different dispensations of his grace are imparted in different proportions, and distinguished by a diversity of gifts, all corresponding to the accomplishment of the purposes intended, " dividing to every man severally as he will." All that we can possibly discover of those secret and mysterious proceedings is from judging of

causes by effects; and therefore, all that I shall venture to attempt on this subject will be, to sketch some of the more striking traces of his ministry, as they are manifested in the life of the true believer. They may, and certainly do, differ in various persons, but the prominent points are the same in all: like the general form and features of the human countenance, which however infinitely diversified, are yet sufficiently characteristic in every one to indicate the species to which it belongs.

I shall begin with observing, that one of the first evidences we have, that the ministry of the blessed Spirit hath been exercised in the heart; or, more properly speaking, in the words of the apostle, that a man hath "received the Holy Ghost since he believed;" arises *from the clear and perfect conviction which he possesses of sin.* I mention this first, and in priority of order, because from the observations of our blessed Lord upon the subject, and perhaps I might add, from the common experience of mankind concerning it, this should seem to be in general the preparatory work of grace in the heart.

That the gospel of Christ is altogether founded on the fallen and lost state of human nature, it would be superfluous, I take for granted, to produce arguments in proof: for, indeed, this is the peculiar and distinguishing feature of our holy faith. And that this idea of Christianity pre-supposes in the favoured objects of its clemency, a thorough conviction of their own wants and unworthiness, together with suitable apprehensions of the Divine mercy in the appointment of such a salvation as hath been accomplished, must also be implied. For as Christ justly reasons, "They that are whole need not a physician; it is *only* they that are sick," (Luke v. 31.) And as the man in perfect health would reprobate the proposal of any person's giving medicine to him; so equally absurd would it be to recommend the expediency of a Redeemer to a person truly righteous. It

should seem, therefore, that nothing could be more palpable and obvious, than that a sense of sin must precede the apprehension of salvation; and that the soul which is conscious of being lost, can only know the want or value of a Saviour. But with these facts in full view, however in theory the doctrine may be allowed, in practice it is overlooked and forgotten. It would be almost endless to enumerate the great variety of causes by which the corruption and apostacy of man is hidden from his sight. With *some*, slight notions of sin satisfy the mind, as if the moral turpitude of it was of little consequence, and human offences were for the most part venial. Whilst *others* content themselves with partial and unconcerned confessions of unworthiness, as though there were a merit in the acknowledgment, and the heart might remain uninterested. *Another class*, confidently presuming that the law is not so strict as hath been represented, venture to conclude, that a general *sincerity* of character is all that is required, and that a good intention will supply the place of a perfect obedience.* And *many more*,

* Perhaps, among the causes which have operated to this self-deception, none of them hath tended more to induce a laxity of attention to the solemn declarations of Scripture concerning the Divine displeasure against sin, than what hath arisen from this deceitful and dangerous opinion of *sincerity*. It is a favourite notion, which hath of late years crept in, and (chiming so exactly with the wishes of the corrupt heart) hath formed a very conspicuous figure in the system of our *modern* divinity, that this *law of sincerity* is intended to answer for our imperfect obedience to the law of God; and since man is confessedly not equal to the one, Divine Goodness will accept of the other. A doctrine which, if true, would subvert every principle of religion; and not only undermine the gracious truths of the gospel, but, by proving a mutability in the revealed will, highly dishonour God, and leave mankind in ignorance of the proper method of serving him. It would carry me too far from the immediate object I am engaged in the pursuit of, to produce all the reasons which demonstrate the fallacy of such an opinion. But, indeed, without going into the minutiæ of the argument, a single consideration will be enough to refute it.

The apostle hath admirably defined the nature of human offences, when he said, that "sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John iii. 4.) Now a law given implies that some penalty is annexed to any breach of it. So that the law of God once broken, necessarily exposes the trans-

improving on this doctrine, have gone so far as to fancy man in himself to be an amiable creature, full of benevolent affections, and that the great purpose of his present

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gressor to the threatened punishment. Even in human laws this is the case. Suppose, for example, that I was clearly proved guilty of a single crime, to the commission of which the law had appointed certain punishment, it would be in vain for me to plead, that in all the other parts of conduct I had sincerely acted, and lived up to the obedience of the law. Nay, if I could make it appear that my whole life had been spent, except in this one instance, in doing good; this, though it might tend to recommend me as an object more worthy of compassion, could make no alteration in the crime itself, of which I had been fully convicted. Either, therefore, I must suffer the just sentence of the law, or the law must be broken to accommodate itself to my situation. Now this is precisely the state of the case respecting the law of God, only, indeed, with this vast abatement in the atrocity of sin, when viewed as committed against man, from what it is when perpetrated against God. For it is not in one, but in innumerable instances, the best of men have violated his righteous decrees, and rendered themselves obnoxious to his just punishment. And with respect to the extenuation of the sins of life by a contrary conduct, few, if any, have aught to plead before their Maker for a single virtue, if that virtue, with the motives of it, were to be analyzed. So much allowance is to be taken out for situation, for ability, for the power of action given to one more than to another, that if human goodness were to be ascertained in a proper crucible, the residuum would be found little indeed! To return, then, to our argument. The law of God solemnly and unalterably decrees, that death is the sure consequence of sin. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The same law of obedience, and the same penalty to disobedience, which was held forth to the first sinner in the garden of Eden, hath been invariably held forth to all sinners ever since. In the law of Moses, and in the gospel of Christ, the doctrine is the same. It stands in full force, unaltered and unrepealed. And will any man venture to think that the law is broken by the introduction of the gospel? Merciful Redeemer! what a most awful proof hast thou given in thy agonies and cross, of the immutability of the divine law, when such sufferings were sustained in thy sacred person, to shew that a broken law could not otherwise be atoned for. And is it possible, with such an alarming instance before our eyes, and with the solemn declarations of the word of God in our hands, that men can so slightingly talk of the law of God, and suppose that a law of sincerity is established in its stead? Is not this actually charging the Father with capriciousness, in having once promulgated his will, and now relaxing in his demands of it? Is it not also robbing the Great Redeemer of every thing dear in his name or valuable in his ministry, if, when for the salvation which he hath wrought with so much personal labour and suffering as he underwent, he only intended after all to co-operate with *our sincerity?* And are not all the gracious acts of the Holy Ghost, in convincing the heart of sin, and sanctifying our corrupt

existence is, for the discharge of his social duties: consigning over, therefore, other obligations to such as find themselves interested in them, they sit down perfectly composed and satisfied, trusting that a general inoffensiveness of behaviour towards their neighbour, will be sufficient to recommend them to the mercy of their God. And thus, with even the Scriptures in their hands, what multitudes are there who live and die in the vanity of their minds, unacquainted with the real state of their

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nature, become nugatory and unavailing, when man's sincerity is substituted among the means of salvation?

Such notions can only proceed from inattention to the revealed word of God, and to the want of the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Men may talk of a law of sincerity as long as they please, but it is all human invention, unauthorized by revelation, and contrary to every idea of an unchangeable God. Before such doctrines are promulgated in the world, it would be becoming in the patrons of them to point out in what part of the Bible they are to be found. I defy any man to produce a single passage, where it is said or intimated, that God hath repealed his original law, and declared that he will accept of our sincerity in the room of unsinning obedience. He hath, indeed, (glory to his holy name,) appointed a means of salvation for sinners, in the astonishing scheme of the death of his Divine Son. But surely the very death of Christ becomes the most decided proof of his irreconcileable hatred to sin, and speaks by every agony which our Lord sustained in the accomplishment of it, that the breach of his law cannot pass with impunity. For when "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law," it was, we are told, in "being made a curse for us," (Gal. iii. 13.) "God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. v. 21.)

It were to be wished, therefore, that the advocates of such opinions would coolly and seriously consider these things. And recollect, moreover, that the same argument of *sincerity* might be brought in extenuation of half the errors of life. The Jews who crucified Christ, as well as Saul who persecuted his followers, would all plead their sincerity; they, as well as he, no doubt, would say, that they "verily thought that they ought to have done many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," (Acts xxvi. 9.) And under such circumstances, if the plea was once admitted, we might expect to see, at the judgment-seat of Christ, mankind generally approved, instead of "the whole world becoming guilty before God." May these considerations be sanctified by Divine grace to the great end hereby intended, that no man may seek shelter for himself under the persuasion, or what is yet worse, teach others, that the law of sincerity is the law of God; for this will awfully verify our Lord's declaration, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," (Matt. xv. 14.)

fallen nature, and unconscious of any operation of grace in the soul; and go down to the grave full of complacency, having but little apprehensions of their own unworthiness, and but slight and superficial views of the necessity of a Redeemer!

To reprove for this sin, in all its multiform appearances, is the sole work of the Holy Ghost; and simple and perspicuous as the operation may appear, it is in His power only to accomplish it. Not all the arguments of reason, nor all the checks of conscience in the mind, which the most inconsiderate and thoughtless are at times visited with; no, nor even all the solemn and positive declarations of the Word of God itself, until the Holy Spirit of grace has given energy to it by His influence, can impress the conviction of it in sufficient force upon the soul. The situation which the prophet Daniel was reduced to, when "his comeliness was turned into corruption," (Dan. x. 8,) (and which will be the state of every man, when viewing himself in a right light,) can be effected only by the operation of the blessed Spirit. And if you are really anxious to gain information in a matter which infinitely concerns you, and would know whether "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed," you cannot have a more infallible standard, than in what arises from the evidences of your own heart upon this very point.

Shall I then desire you to pause and examine yourself by those principles? Have you the most ample conviction of human guilt, as it must appear before God? Seeing that both prophets and apostles have testified in all their writings the fallen state of human nature, are *you* impressed with a perfect sense of it? Can you from your heart adopt the same sentiments of yourself, as those faithful servants of the Lord humbly entertained after all their labours? Can you say with David, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," (Psalm li. 5:) and with Isaiah, "Woe is

me, for I am a man of unclean lips," (Isaiah vi. 5:) with Job, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," (Job xlii. 6:) and with St. Paul, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing," (Rom. vii. 18.) If those holy men of God possessed such humble ideas of themselves, even as we are told, to have "the sentence of death in themselves, that they might not trust in themselves," (1 Cor. i. 9;) and to cry out, under the conviction of sin, in such words as one of them hath done, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death," (Rom. vii. 24:) are you not most awfully convinced that slight and formal acknowledgments of sin cannot correspond with the conviction that is wrought by the blessed Spirit? And therefore, by these rules you will be able to form an accurate judgment of yourself, whether "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed."

And if such a sense of sin be absolutely necessary to precede the desire of deliverance from it; if by nature man is thus fallen and corrupt, and must have a recovery and cleansing to prepare him for another state; and if the consciousness of his misery can only lead the heart to seek the means of redemption; think in how dangerous a situation that soul stands, who is hourly hastening to his eternal home, and hath but a few steps more perhaps to accomplish his journey; and yet ignorant of the corruptions of his nature, uninformed of his wretchedness, hath never felt uneasiness under the burden of sin, nor lifted a voice of supplication to be delivered from it! Punish me, O my God, as often, and as severely as thy mercy sees necessary, and my departure from duty requires; but let me not sleep over my offences, and remain unconscious of my corruption and my sin! Let thy chastisement rouse me to seek the means of redemption, and let thy Holy Spirit lead me to the way of peace; lest falling into the sleep of death, with a nature unwashed in the blood of Christ, and unregenerated by the Holy

Ghost, I shall only then awake and open my eyes in a future state to the awful concerns of eternity, where the season of grace will be known no more!

I pass on to another distinguishing property, whereby the operations of the Holy Ghost in the heart may be ascertained and known; namely, by effecting in the believer's mind sincere and true repentance. This is what the prophet predicted should be the immediate consequence of the Lord's pouring out, in the latter days, a spirit of grace and supplication upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem: that "they should look upon him whom they had pierced, and mourn as one that mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness as one in bitterness for his first-born," (Zech. xii. 20.) And wherever the Holy Ghost hath shed his gracious influence and produced the effects described, under the preceding instance of his ministry, in "convincing the heart of sin," the soul will be involuntarily led to mourn over a nature so corrupt and fallen as she finds in herself, and "repent in dust and ashes."

It is beside my present purpose to enter upon the doctrine of repentance itself, or to offer any argument by way of proving it to be an indispensable duty. Few, I believe, will venture to deny it. But all that I am now interested to shew is, that where this principle is wrought and manifested in the heart by its pure and genuine properties, it carries with it the most convincing proof of the divine agency of the Holy Ghost, because this, like all other graces of the Spirit, can only originate from his operations.

It was among the first purposes of our blessed Lord in his donations upon mankind, after his being exalted as a Prince and Saviour, to "give repentance to Israel and remission of sins," (Acts v. 31.) And accordingly we find the apostles rejoicing upon every occasion, when this blessed gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted. When Peter related before the brethren at Judea the circum-

stances of the conversion of Cornelius, it is said that "they glorified God, because that he had *granted* to the Gentiles also repentance unto life," (Acts xi. 18.) And hence St. Paul, when recommending to Timothy the manner in which he should labour for the spiritual welfare of his hearers, places the whole hopes of the success of his ministry upon this foundation, "if God peradventure would *give* them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," (2 Tim. ii. 25.) "Knowing," as he elsewhere observed, that "it is the goodness of God which leadeth to repentance," (Rom. ii. 4.)

As the clear apprehension of this doctrine is of the utmost importance to a religious audience, I very much wish that it came within the limits which I am obliged to observe, to give it a particular discussion. For if it were once rightly understood, it might tend, under the influences of Divine grace, to prevent the very melancholy scenes which the ministers of the gospel are but too often witnesses of, in the discharge of one of the parochial duties of their office, the visitation of the sick; when the unhappy persons labouring under any bodily disorder, from mistaken conceptions of the nature of repentance, and unconscious from whose gracious operation in the soul the blessing must be derived, are prompted to take up with a false and spurious kind of it, and "speak peace to themselves when there is no peace." Though my present plan precludes the possibility of going into this subject largely, yet I shall offer a few observations, which will serve to throw some light upon it, and place the doctrine in a clearer point of view than that in which it hath been generally represented. And this purpose will be fully obtained by distinctly stating the leading characters, which distinguish the true and sincere repentance that cometh from God, from the false and deceitful form, which is but too commonly substituted for it in the world. This discrimination will enable any man, who is serious in the inquiry,

and explores the subject with a proper dependence upon the aid of heaven, to ascertain the point with precision, and to satisfy himself upon this as well as on the former particular, whether he hath "received the Holy Ghost since he believed."

The principles of true and false repentance are so perfectly distinguishable from each other, and spring from sources so opposite, that a small attention is sufficient to discern them by their respective qualities. In *false* repentance, there is no dislike to the past transgressions, but for their consequences. The sole motive of distress originates in the awakened apprehensions of what may result from iniquity, and in dreadful forebodings of Divine wrath. On the contrary, the most striking feature of that *true* repentance which arises from the Spirit of grace in the heart, is an irreconcilable hatred to sin, as the sad cause of all misery, accompanied with the most poignant sorrow, for having offended so infinitely gracious and merciful a Being as God. These great outlines in the character of both are sufficient to define their opposite causes and effects; and whoever attends to them in the examination of each, will find an uniform correspondence and connection extending to every part of the conduct.

The sins and corruptions of our fallen nature are in themselves, generally speaking, productive of such woful consequences, that they must unavoidably, sooner or later, induce an anguish of heart. It is hardly possible for any one, when smarting under the effects of them, to restrain the tear of sorrow. The man who has lost his reputation by dishonesty, or broken his constitution by intemperance; he who has reduced himself to poverty by extravagance, or ruined his family by dissipation; in short, whoever by his vices of any kind has brought misery upon himself, and estranged from him the love and affection of mankind, when sinking at once under the load of guilt and disease, without friends

and without comfort, almost unpitied and disregarded; in such a situation, among either of these characters, repentance is unavoidable. No man can look back but with sorrow upon a train of conduct productive of such evils. But if this be all the cause of his distress, it is evident there is no regard had to God in it: the whole ariseth from merely personal and worldly considerations: there is no compunction of heart for a life of ingratitude and rebellion against God; no sorrow for having slighted the sufferings of the blessed Redeemer for sin; nor distress for having grieved the Holy Spirit. These are considerations of no weight in the scale of false repentance. And as the only motives which induce sorrow, are the smart of present pain, and the presage of future punishment; supposing these causes possible to be removed, the effect would also cease. The sinner would return to his former courses with renewed delight; and in the language of the sensualist described in Scripture, would exult in the gaiety of his heart: "Come and let us fetch wine and fill ourselves with strong drink, and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," (Isaiah lvi. 12.) Every species of repentance induced by such causes, is what the apostle Paul, in his emphatical way of expression, calls "the sorrow of the world," which is totally contrasted, both in its nature and effects, to the *godly sorrow* which bringeth repentance. "Godly sorrow (says he) worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death," (2 Cor. vii. 10.)

But if you analyze the repentance which arises from the operation of the blessed Spirit in the heart, you will find all those properties which prove it to be pure and genuine. The true penitent hath an eye principally to God in all the causes and motives of his sorrow. The language of his heart is, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" (Rom. vii. 24.) "Against Thee only have I sinned, and

done this evil in thy sight," (Psalm li. 4.) "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," (Psalm li. 3. 9, 10.) "Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me: make haste, O Lord, to help me," (Psalm xl. 13.) Such are the sentiments of a real penitent, in whom the Lord hath poured a "spirit of grace and of supplication!" In whose language you may plainly discover, that his greatest distresses arise from the consciousness of human depravity and human guilt. They are not induced so much by the fear of punishment as the dread of sin: not for this reason only, that he is conscious of being liable to the awful judgment of God, but that he is also sensible he justly deserves it. And though in the contemplation of the rich mercies of Christ, he is led to hope that God will forgive him, yet he cannot forgive himself.

The difference therefore between a false and true repentance, is as great as any thing the circumstances of human life will admit, or the opposite sources from whence they originate, can be supposed to produce. The one arises solely from man, the other cometh from God. The one is the effect of fear; the other, of love. The one is excited by the dread of punishment; the other by that of sin. The one still loves the cause of his misery; to the other it is his greatest aversion. In the one, the sorrow is merely mechanical, for the heart remains the same as before: in the other, the sorrow is real, for the heart is changed. In the one, repentance is the employment of a season: with the other, it is the habitual practice of life. The reformation, if attempted by the one, is partial, and intends no more than what may be hoped to compensate for past sins: the aim of the other is no less than an entire change of heart and life; and he studies not only how to walk and please God, but also "to abound therein more and more."

These are very discriminating marks, and surely sufficient to enable any man to discern the true principle of godly repentance, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in the true believer, from that false resemblance of it, which men of the world put on and off, like an upper garment, as occasion suits, when compelled to it by their fears. If I have been happy enough to explain the subject properly, I hope a satisfactory answer may be obtained from it to the question in the text, by every one who is sincerely desirous of it, and who will look into his own heart for that purpose, whether in this evidence also, as in the former, he hath "received the Holy Ghost since he believed."*

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* From a conviction that this doctrine of repentance is not so generally understood in the sense of Scripture as it ought, but even among sincere Christians, advanced in the path of the true spiritual life, erroneous opinions are sometimes entertained concerning it, I am induced to add, by way of note, (to what hath been already offered in proof of this principle being the gift of the Holy Spirit) that though repentance be among the essential duties of the Gospel, yet it is not among the *efficient* means of salvation. Overlooking the sole cause of this divine blessing, which is in the free gift of God through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, some have been led to suppose, that faith and repentance, and a new life, are the *conditional* terms on the part of man for partaking of the rich mercies of redemption. But this is a mistaken apprehension, for want of attending more closely to the sense of Scripture. A real Christian would be much hurt if it was suggested to him that he thought his righteousness and good deeds became profitable unto God, or were admitted as a part in the cause of his justification before him. But yet in effect every believer entertains sentiments similar to this, when he supposes that his faith and repentance are so many helps towards it. For the truth is, neither the one nor the other are any more the efficient means of obtaining eternal salvation than morality or good works. "It is by grace (says the apostle) that ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," (Ephes ii. 8.) It is all therefore a gift, a free gift, and there can be no more merit or value in one quality than in another. The ability of performing either comes from God; and therefore it cannot be supposed, that what is first given can afterwards be brought forward as our own. And indeed were we to suppose it possible that man could produce an atom as co-operating with his Redeemer in the means of obtaining mercy from that moment we should rob Christ of his honour; and every virtue which now, by being wrought by Divine Grace, reflects back the praise unto Him to whom alone it is due, for imparting the ability of perform

The third distinguishing operation of the Holy Ghost n the heart is manifested, when the believer is led to egard Christ as "the sole cause of salvation." When say the *third*, I beg to be understood that I do not nean, by this way of speaking, to describe either the orm or manner in which the work of the blessed Spirit s carried on in the soul. Christ is the whole of salva- ion; his incommunicable work hath nothing to add to t; neither can any thing be taken from it. But by the *hird* operation of God the Holy Ghost on the heart, I neant to say, that the Lord the Spirit having, by the *wo* former, namely, conviction of sin, and sorrow of oul, prepared the mind, now leads the awakened sinner o Christ alone for salvation. I would desire to remind ou of what was before observed respecting his gracious lispensations, that both in the distribution and method of bestowing them, he acts according to the purposes of his own will. In my endeavours to sketch the shades of his ministry, all that I am concerned to demonstrate rom them is, the evidences they bring, that the Spirit of grace, with his favourable influence, hath operated upon the heart. But whether the *first* operation of his

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ng it, would then derogate from his free gift of unmerited salvation, nd become a diminution of the Redeemer's glory. It is therefore the peculiar excellency of the blessed Gospel, "that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," (Rom. xi. 29.) Nothing of human worth moving God to such bounty in bestowing them. If it be asked, What then is faith, and to what purpose serves repentance? The answer is direct. They are so many seals and testimonies that a spirit of grace has taken place in the soul; evidences that a life of regenera- tion is begun in the believer's heart. But while we look upon them in this light, as most essential principles, we cannot, we dare not indeed, consider them as among the means of salvation. Though indispensable *duties*, they are not efficient *operations*. The great work of man's re- demption is wholly accomplished by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," (Heb. x. 10.) And therefore "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen," (Rom. xi. 36.) I thought it proper to state this doctrine as it appears in Scripture, and shall be happy if these cursory observations serve to explain it to any one, who may not before have had right notions con- cerning it.

mercy be manifested by awakening in the sinner's mind a conviction of sin, and then progressively leading him to repentance; or whether, by opening to the eye of his soul affecting views of the Redeemer's sufferings for his offences and those of the human race, the heart is prompted to feel its unworthiness, and to mourn over a nature so miserably corrupt and fallen as it is: these are circumstances in the operations of grace which I do not presume to explain. In some, no doubt, the conviction of sin is a preparatory work; witness the apostle Paul, and the *three thousand* who were pricked in their hearts by the effect of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. But from others we are at a loss to conclude, whether humbling views of human transgression preceded or followed in the steps of conversion. Who shall take upon him to say what method the blessed Spirit was pleased to adopt in imparting the influence of his grace to Zaccheus, or the Ethiopian, or Lydia, whose heart was at once opened? All that I mean, therefore, in describing the operations of the Holy Ghost, under several distinct particulars, is for the sake of regularity and order, and not with the most distant idea to imply, that the ministry of his grace is conducted in the manner it is here stated. These are among the "secret things which belong to the Lord our God;" but "those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever," (Deut. xxix. 29.)

In that proof of the agency of the Holy Ghost, now under consideration, his divine acts are exerted in teaching the believer to place his entire confidence in Jesus, as the sole cause of salvation. And in no one operation of his grace is his divine influence more needful, in order to induce such a principle of faith in the heart of man. For nature, unenlightened and untaught by the blessed Spirit of truth, revolts at the doctrine of righteousness by a Redeemer, and is for ever proposing other means of justification with it. The natural man cannot pos-

sibly reconcile himself to the belief of this truth, being persuaded that something must be done on his part also, by way of auxiliary to the Saviour's merits; and fancies that a contrary opinion tends to relax the principles of virtue, and must produce a disregard to good works. Hence the endless substitutions which, in various ages of the church, have been devised, to quiet the clamours of conscience, and propitiate the favour of GOD. I should exceed the limits I intended to observe, were I to enumerate but a small part only of the methods by which this self-righteousness hath been manifested in the world. For instance, by alms-deeds and works of charity; by personal suffering and fasting; by stated periods appropriated to repentance; by a diligent application to the forms of religion. To this one cause what a profusion of liberality may be ascribed! How many hospitals have been built for the poor, and churches consecrated to God! How many sacrifices have been offered by way of commutation in the punishment of the body, for the sin of the soul! To soothe their minds, what compromises have men proposed for the purchase of heaven! If God would dispense with certain duties, they would repay him with a greater portion of prayers; and the want of inward purity should be compensated with an increased attention to outward ceremonies of worship. Nay, even among those, whose religion should have taught them better, who were willing to accept of Jesus under the character of a Saviour; yet by qualifying his commission, as if connected with the joint operation of human merit in the attainment of salvation, they have reduced the value of his sacrifice to a mere nothing, and left him but little more than the name. By partly seeking salvation through Christ, and partly in themselves: supposing that their own righteousness is taken into the account, and that the righteousness of Jesus supplies the deficiency of their own; by thus laying the foundation in man, and completing the work in God:

what a motley redemption is made of it by such devices? "No man (says our Divine teacher) putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old," (Luke v. 36.) And yet his disciples are for patching up the garment of their own righteousness (which the prophet, in his nervous manner of expression, calls *filthy rags*, Isaiah lxiv. 6,) with a piece of the robe of Christ; whose coat "without seam, woven from the top throughout," (John xix. 23,) in the days of his flesh, was beautifully emblematical of the complete righteousness of his person, as necessary to the covering, or justification, of the sinner! And like the Jews of old, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they cannot submit themselves unto the righteousness of God," (Rom. x. 3.) By these and the like deceptions, arising from one fatal cause, the inveterate pride and corruption of our fallen nature, multitudes in all ages (and God only knows how many in the present hour) have been miserably blinded.

To cure the mind of this disease, by opening the understanding to proper apprehensions of the high dignity of Christ, the riches of his grace, and the poor estate and unworthiness of the sinner, is the sole work of the Holy Ghost. And the process of grace by which it is accomplished, corresponds to exigencies which call for it. By convincing the heart of sin, the utter inability of man to do any thing towards his own salvation, is fully shewn; and by explaining the infinite merits of the Redeemer's death, it appears that he hath by that "one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified," (Heb. x. 14.) When these things are explained by the blessed Spirit of truth, then all the leading doctrines of the gospel appear to the apprehension in their just and proper characters. Then is it seen how that "Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25.) And that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the

obedience of One shall many be made righteous." And as "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," (Rom. v. 19, 18.) "He hath purchased our peace through the blood of his cross," (Coloss. i. 20.) And "of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," (1 Cor. i. 30.) In the contemplation of all which, the prophet thus exults, in that strain of animation recorded in his prophecies; "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come, and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed," (Isaiah xlv.)

But on this topic I need not enlarge. If "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed," under this part of his gracious work, your own ideas will best explain the method by which the blessed Spirit hath illustrated these divine truths to the heart. In "the anointing which ye have received of him, ye need not that any man teach you," (1 John ii. 27.) Suffer me only to recommend to you the frequent examination of yourselves by this infallible evidence. If the Holy Ghost has been your instructor, you will have learned that Christ is the sole Author and Finisher of salvation, and that "ye are complete in him," (Coloss. ii. 10.) And though you may not as yet have attained strength in this principle, neither are already perfect; not having yet "cast off the covering of sackcloth, nor received the garment of praise;" yet going on "in the strength of the Lord God, and making mention of his righteousness only," it is promised, that "he that holdeth on his way shall be stronger and stronger," (Job xvii. 9.) Your faith may not be equal to that of the noble Centurion, or to that of the woman of Canaan; yet if the misgivings of the mind should at any time suggest the proving inquiry of the Lord, "Believest thou that I can do this?"

you may at least be able to reply, like the poor man to whom it was first proposed, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," (Mark ix. 24.) Every believer, indeed, hath reason to adopt the apostle's prayer, "Lord, increase our faith." But it should be remembered, that the grain of mustard-seed contains in embryo all the future branches of the tree. And in the possession of this gift of the Holy Spirit, you may give answer, as the disciples did, to the affectionate question of the Master, when he had sent them forth to preach the gospel, with apparently but small provision for their journey; "Lacked ye any thing?" And they said, "Nothing, Lord," (Luke xxii. 35.) Nothing, indeed, can the soul be truly said to want, who hath found Him, "of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth;" and is convinced, not from the testimony of others, but from his own personal knowledge, that "he is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world," (John iv. 42.)

The *fourth* evidence which I have to notice, of the agency of the blessed Spirit in the heart, and by which a satisfying answer to the question in the text may be obtained, is that most important instance of it, *regeneration;* on which Christ lays so much stress as an indispensable condition for an entrance into his kingdom. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John iii. 3.)

I have stated this of *regeneration*, as an evidence of having received the Holy Ghost, for the child of God to take comfort in; and here, by way of order, have called it the *fourth;* but in fact, it is the *first* work of God the Holy Ghost, before which there can neither be conviction of sin; nor repentance; nor faith in Christ.

This doctrine of regeneration, the production of which is among the highest acts of the Holy Ghost, and in the possession of which the great Author of Christianity places his whole system, as to its practical in-

fluence on the minds of believers, is of all others, such as the preachers of the Divine word are least competent to describe. I cannot, by any form of words, explain the mode by which this sacred operation is carried on in the soul. Neither the time when, nor the manner how, the work is performed, are known to the world. Who shall describe, indeed, that wonderful process, by which a spirit of grace is conveyed into the mind? Who shall discern the channel by which God enters the heart? But the fact itself is not less certain for our dullness or inability of perception. In that memorable conversation which our blessed Lord held with the Jewish ruler upon the subject, he has made use of a beautiful figure by way of illustration. "Marvel not (says Christ) that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," (John iii. 8.) The most learned of men have never yet been able, by all their investigations, to account for the origin of winds; where the storm is first engendered, how it is kept up, and where its retreat is, when it subsides. No hypothesis has been equal to this discovery. All that is known of it is, what Christ hath said, "thou hearest the sound thereof;" and that it cometh and goeth. And the man at the plough, as well as the philosopher, is able to discern the same. In like manner, the Spirit of grace in the heart of man, like the unknown source of the air, "bloweth where it listeth:" its gracious presence is known only by its effects. But if there be certain marks, by which that presence may be traced; if (for example) you perceive a thorough change wrought upon any man in his whole character, and he who before lived a life of sense and appetite, as without Christ and without God in the world, is become a new creature; "hath put off (as the apostle speaks) concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according

to the deceitful lusts; and is renewed in the spirit of his mind; and hath put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," (Ephes. iv. 22:) why may we not from hence infer, that the spirit of grace hath taken place in him, when Scripture speaks so decidedly upon it? That there is a change accomplished in the conduct is certain; and why should it be thought incredible that it proceeded from God? Though His ways and works are dark as the secrets of the deep to us, yet by their effects we may, in a great measure, trace them to their source. And as the principles of spiritual life, which distinguish the children of God from the children of the world, are drawn with such accuracy by the sacred writers, there can be no danger of our being led into error or delusion, while we accept the rule they have given us as the standard of decision. "In this (says the apostle) the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God," (1 John iii. 10, 9.) Very clear and strong definitions these, of the different characters represented; and sufficient attestations at the same time do they afford to the certainty of the doctrine.

I shall take up no more of your time in the inductions of proofs to the truth of regeneration, but rather desire you to look into your heart for the evidences of its reality. "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed" in these decisive and unerring marks of a new birth? Has any change taken place in the disposition of our minds and the conduct of our life, since we entered into being; or do we remain the same we ever were, with respect to the objects of our pursuits and affections? Have we the same tempers, the same habits, the same indifference and inattention to holy things, as distinguish men of the world from sincere lovers of God; or "are we renewed in the spirit of our mind?" In a word, "are we followers of God as dear children: walk-

ing in love, as Christ also hath loved us: delighting in the law of God after the inward man;" and manifesting a spirit of grace in all the departments of duty?

In your serious investigation of these points, let me caution you against resting satisfied with a superficial examination. Imagine not, that any and every alteration, which may have taken place in your conduct, is an evidence of the new birth. Changes are perpetually occurring in the sentiments and manners of men of no religion, from the vicissitudes of life, from an alteration of time and circumstances, and from mere worldly and prudential motives; all which are perfectly distinct things from the spiritual operations of grace in the soul, and are the effects of very opposite causes. Many from the love of reputation, from the dread of shame, from a regard to bodily health or temporal welfare; from a respect for man, or from fear of God, have been restrained from sinful courses, and have taken up a principle of reform. Hence sots have become sober, and libertines chaste. But these are easily discernible from the renewed nature wrought by the Spirit of grace. Where "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," (Rom. v. 5,) there will be a change of the whole character. Not only in the more immediate seasons of devotion, but in all the departments both of social and active life; in all the transactions between man and man, as well as the duties towards God; a train of uniform behaviour, corresponding to that divine principle, will pervade and influence the whole man in his disposition and conduct.

Shall I then once more entreat you who read these lines, (and in terms of earnestness suited to the importance of the occasion,) to examine yourself by these discriminating characters on this grand point of inquiry, which every Christian should make, and the testimony he should give concerning himself; whether "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" The evi-

dences of it you ought not to be a stranger to. "The world, indeed, may know you not, because it knew him not," (1 John iii. 1.) In this respect it is not unlike the *hidden manna*, which "no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it," (Rev. ii. 17.) But surely the soul, which is fed and sustained by it from day to day, cannot but know from whence he derives the principle of spiritual life. If then, O Christian, whoever thou art, in whom, upon examination, the real testimonies of this divine life appear, to thee the prophet speaks in these animating words: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And in allusion to the same auspicious events, in a strain of the same beautiful imagery, the Redeemer himself is represented as comforting his church. "Lo, the winter will soon be past; the rain will be over and gone; the flowers will appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds will come, and the voice of the turtle will be heard in the land."

A *fifth evidence*, whereby the reception of the Holy Ghost in the heart may be known, is founded "in the love of the brethren." And small and inconsiderable as this may seem, and is, indeed, compared with the other more important proofs, which have passed in review, yet it is not without its peculiar value among the testimonies of regeneration. Many humble souls have been sustained and comforted in a dark and disconsolate hour, from the possession of this abiding principle, when every other evidence of the blessed Spirit's operations hath for awhile seemed to have forsaken them. But in all seasons they have been able to adopt the apostle's sentiments, and to receive from it a good hope through grace.

"We know (says he) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," (1 John. iii. 14.)

In desiring you to search for this testimony of the Spirit in your heart, I am here again concerned to caution you against a misapprehension, which may be made of this doctrine. It should be remembered, that it is the "love of the brethren," peculiarly distinguished from the "love of the world," which is here spoken of as an evidence of the spiritual life. There is an universal love of all men, as fellow-creatures and as men, participating in one common nature, and which is the affection of humanity, and may be felt by sinners as well as by saints. Heathens and publicans, our Lord tells us, possess this kind of benevolence towards each other, and sometimes, indeed, in a very eminent degree. But then this is what may be called an unsanctified humanity; extending only to the concerns of this perishing life, and in which the important objects of the next are disregarded. Not so is even the affection which the true believer carries in his bosom, to the whole race of men; for while he earnestly desires and studies to promote their temporal interests, his grand aim is to forward, if possible, their eternal concerns. And whilst manifesting, in a general benevolence of character, his wishes for their present peace, his prayers are continually offered up for their future happiness. But all this is short, far short indeed, of what the apostle referred to as an evidence of regeneration. The love of the brethren is yet a more peculiar, a more endearing, a more intimate union of affection and regard. The one is the general love of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures of the human race; the other, is the tender relation between "fellow-heirs of the kingdom," (Ephes. iii. 6,) "and fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," (Ephes. ii. 19,) united in the holy bands of Christian fellowship and love. It is the love of the brethren, therefore, as *brethren*, which the apostle speaks of as the testimony of spiritual

life. It is that unity which is represented in Scripture, under a great variety of images, to denote the connection of Christ with his people, of them with him, and with each other. He, as the *vine*, and they the *branches*, (John xv. 6.) He, as the "chief corner-stone," and they "the building," (Ephes. ii. 20.) He, as the "head, from whom all the body by joints and bands hath nourishment ministered and knit together," (Coloss. ii. 19;) and they, the "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," (Ephes. v. 30.) All which is intended to intimate how very near is that connection and unity of heart, which true believers have with each other, when they are really and virtually ingrafted into their living Head. However divided in the world and separated by distant seas and climes; though they have never seen the face of one another in the flesh, and will not personally be known to each other, until they meet in glory; yet are they united in the best and most durable of all relations, in the mystical body of Christ their Lord.

If, then, you would consult your heart for the testimony of regeneration by this mark, which the apostle hath stated in the love of the brethren, let it be done, I beseech you, by these unequivocal characters. Do you love the brethren as *brethren;* children of the same Father; followers of the same Redeemer; regenerated by the same Spirit; and heirs of the same promises? You may recollect that to the giver of a cup of cold water the promised reward of the Master was held forth, when it should be given to any one of his followers in "the name of a disciple," (Matt. x. 42;) do you then feel such an interest in all their concerns, to whom this character properly belongs, as on that account, not to refuse them any needful assistance or refreshment? Do you "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;" tenderly sympathizing in all their sorrows with the distressed members of Christ, however distinguished or however diversified they may be? And

could you, if it became necessary, in testimony of the faith, imitate the conduct of Moses, "who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?" (Heb. xi. 25.) In a word, though every principle of nature and religion tends to enforce that benevolent precept, "as we have opportunity let us do good unto all men;" yet hath the Spirit of grace enabled you to act from a principle of faith and love, in conformity to the apostle's illustration of it, in the especial discharge of these duties, "to them who are of the household of faith," (Gal. vi. 10.) In the examination of the heart under these discriminating particulars, you will be competent to judge respecting this testimony also, whether "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed." And as the possession of such an evidence is at times attended with peculiar satisfaction in the breast of the true believer, when others may be less manifest, so on the other hand, there cannot be a more decisive and infallible proof that a man is *not* in a state of a grace, when he can discover in himself no traces of this principle. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John iv. 20.) "Every one that loveth Him (that is God) that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him," (1 John v. 1.) "But he that loveth not his brother abideth in death," (1 John iii. 14.)

I shall take notice but of one testimony more by which an opinion may be justly formed concerning the grand question in the text: (and I shall mention it only in a very cursory way, having already far exceeded the limits originally intended:) I mean the evidence derived from that holy superiority with which a true believer passes through the world, neither immoderately attached to life, nor anxiously apprehensive of the approach of death; but in every state displaying the uniform conduct of the Christian, who lives and walks by the faith of a glorious immortality.

If the reasons for the extreme love of life, and the immoderate fear of death, were but analyzed, they would both be found to originate in one and the same fatal cause, which the apostle hath marked with this pointed emphasis, "the sting of death is sin," (1 Cor. xv. 50.) It is this which makes men cowards. This sharpens the deadly wound. For what should otherwise induce the weary hireling, in the evening of life, to lament the lengthening shadows of approaching night, and dread the close of day? What should make the weather-beaten traveller look back with a wishful eye, to renew, if it were possible, the journey he has trod, though chequered with a thousand ills, and every part of it marked with sorrow? What but a sense of sin, and a dread of somewhat to succeed the commission of it? Like the first unhappy transgressor, when once the consciousness of his rebellion and disobedience had taken possession of his breast, the voice of the Lord God, which before had been his highest solace and delight, then became his greatest dread and apprehension of consequences, for he sought to hide himself from the Divine presence amidst the trees of the garden. The same apostacy hath induced similar effects on the minds of all his posterity. There is an horror in death, not only as it is a departure from the world, but more particularly in the prospect of appearing before a justly offended Creator, who will take strict cognizance of human actions: so that the internal feelings of all hearts in an unrenewed state, if expressed to God in the contemplation of these things, would be in such language as this: "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways!" (Job xxi. 14.)

But when once "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, old things are past away, and all things are become new," (2 Cor. v. 17.) The concerns of this life, and the great objects of another, then appear to the true believer in their proper characters, and claim their separate and just regard. He walks

through the world with that wise indifference to the things of it, which influences him as a pilgrim, travelling home to the possession of what he holds to be infinitely more dear and valuable than any thing which this earth can afford. Every thing he meets with, as he passes on, however pleasant to the mind, or how grateful soever to the senses, occupies but a secondary place in his esteem. And while men of the world live only in the spirit, ways, and pursuits of it, and embrace its enjoyments as their supreme good, the renewed Christian is sending his affections on before him, and breathing after immortality. At the time that others attach themselves to the vanities around them, as if they were to be united to them for ever, he is daily weaning himself from all connections here below, and even the most harmless enjoyments hang loose upon him, like the *Prophet's mantle*, ready to be thrown off, and that without regret, whenever occasion shall render it necessary. Thus prosecuting the path of life, neither distinguished by an apathy to it, unbecoming a dutiful submission to the Divine will, nor impatient under suffering, nor anxious to be gone one moment before the time appointed, he manfully perseveres through all the changes of the world, in a cheerful and conscientious discharge of all its duties. Perfectly satisfied that both himself and all his concerns are in the hands of One who cannot possibly mistake, and will not suffer any thing to deprive his faithful people of their happiness in Him; he makes an entire resignation of all he is and has to the disposal of infinite Wisdom. And whether life be long or short, whether spent in prosperous or adverse circumstances, he views every situation, when sanctified by grace, as ministering to his eternal welfare. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God," (Rom. viii. 26.) Both in life and death this is his never-failing maxim: "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," (Phil. i. 21.) Hence, upon all occasions, he experiences

the love of Christ, "and that peace of God which passeth knowledge, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus," (Phil. iv. 7.)

As this then is among the distinguishing qualities in the character of all "who walk by faith and not by sight," (2 Cor. v. 7,) you may very easily determine by this operation also of the blessed Spirit, whether "you have received the Holy Ghost since you believed." When the apostle Paul, for himself and his companions in the Gospel, declared that these effects were manifested in their whole conduct, and particularly that they "were willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord," he ascribes them to the ministry of the Holy Ghost. "He that hath wrought us (says he) for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," (2 Cor. v. 5.) The question is, Can you adopt the same sentiments? Are you in possession of the same principles? Are you "willing rather to be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord?" and do you labour that "whether present or absent you may be accepted of Him?" (2 Cor. v. 8, 9.) If so, you will have learned the happy art which none but a true believer can acquire, in what manner you ought to stand affected to both worlds; neither too much attached to the one, nor regardless of the other; but resolving with the apostle, that "Christ shall be magnified in your body, whether it be by life or by death," (Phil. i. 20.) "For whether you live, you live unto the Lord; or whether you die, you die unto the Lord: whether you live therefore, or die, you are the Lord's," (Rom. xiv. 8.)

I have now set before you some of the evidences of a spiritual life, in the application of which to your own heart by a serious examination, you may, under the influence of Divine Grace, be enabled to ascertain your religious character, and answer very satisfactorily the important question in the text, "Whether you have

received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" I hope however that I shall not be misunderstood, from what hath been offered upon this subject, as if I meant to imply that these testimonies, and no other, are the only *criteria* or distinguishing marks of the believer's character. I do not presume to circumscribe the operations of grace within such limits. Neither do I attempt to state, in what proportion or measure the several qualities I have enumerated are necessary to constitute the regeneration of the heart. These are points which I humbly leave unattempted to explore. I am verily persuaded, that some one or other of the effects of the Divine operations, which I have noticed, are essential, more or less, to the purposes of salvation: and that where none of them are manifested, there can be no doubt but that the life of grace is not begun in the soul.

And now, in conclusion, I have only to recommend what hath been said to your most serious consideration. You see the strong and unanswerable evidences on which the doctrine of the person, GODHEAD, and operations of the blessed Spirit is founded; and you clearly perceive also, I trust, in what a train of the most important circumstances, through his gracious ministry exercised on our nature, those operations involve us. The subject would afford large room for a particular application to the several characters which make up human life. For while it affects our *people* in every point of view in which a matter so highly awful and interesting can be supposed to affect them, and which would take many pages to describe: a volume might be filled with instructions as it concerns the *ministers* only, in the sacred departments of their duty. If the spiritual life of every believer must originate from this Divine Being: if all "the preparations in the heart of man are from the Lord," (Prov. xvi. 1;) and "no one knoweth even what to pray for as he ought," (Rom. viii. 26;) and the consciousness of these truths plead

with the Lord's people for a continual dependence and waiting upon the Holy Spirit: how infinitely solemn must be his situation, superadded to the *personal* duties of the individual, who is called upon to the exercise of a *public* ministry! And what a sanctity of conduct, what a purity of character, what humble and devout attendance upon the teachings of the Holy Ghost, may be expected to distinguish those who minister in sacred things! And with what jealousy will all the faithful servants of the Lord watch over their own souls, particularly while "the people seek the law at their mouth," (Malachi ii. 7,) that they may not deceive them "with sparks of their own kindling," (Isaiah l. 11;) but wait for the Divine help, and until a similar effect to the prophet's be felt, in the seraph's touching the lips, with "a live coal from the holy altar," (Isaiah vi. 6,) by which they will avoid the awful visitation which the sons of Aaron experienced in their ministration; when unsanctified with the holy fire divinely kindled, "they offered strange fire before the Lord," and were consumed in his presence, (Levit. x. 1.)

But I presume not to instruct *those* from whom I might better learn. Leaving this description to their own superior understanding, with the humblest supplications that the grace of that Almighty Being, whose operations we have been in part reviewing, may accompany and bless their ministry; I would turn to offer one word of exhortation to *such* as my province more particularly directs me to regard.

You, my aged *fathers*, whose trembling steps too plainly indicate the period to be near approaching, "when the eye that now seeth you will see you no more," (Job vii. 8;) say, what testimony can you give to the truth of what hath now been delivered? Oh! it is "high time for *you* surely to awake out of sleep, for now is your salvation nearer than when you believed. The night is far spent, the day, *the eternal day*, is at

hand," (Rom. xiii. 11, 12.) Another hour or two, and Jesus, the Morning Star, may appear, (Rev. xxii. 16.) Say then, are your evidences bright and shining? Are you prepared to drop the mortal vestments, and to put on the robes of immortality and glory? As the props of your earthly tabernacle are taking down, one by one, can you look forward with the holy confidence of the apostle, and say with him, "We know, that if our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," (2 Cor. v. 1.)

Nor think, you that are *young in years*, and strong in life, that there is less occasion for admonishing you also, to be wise betimes unto salvation. The duties of the present state are proportioned to the power of action; and those of to-day are doubled if neglected until the morrow. And with what an accumulated force ought this consideration to affect you, when you consider moreover, with due attention, that your time of ability is not only short and proportioned to your labour, but uncertain also. The next day, or the next hour, may put an end to all opportunities for ever. Time is impatient to draw the sum total of every man's life, and to write his monument in the dust. Answer the question then, which I beseech you to put to your own heart, you that are in the prime of your existence, how is your account now standing, should the "Judge be at the door?" (James v. 9.)

With respect to those who are conscious that they continue in the same state of an unrenewed nature, as at their first entrance into being; unawakened, and unconcerned about it, I want words to express their situation and their danger. Figure to yourself the most alarming instances of distress the human mind can conceive. Suppose a man walking blindfold on the edge of a precipice; or another amusing himself in gathering pebbles on the shore, with the tide surrounding him ...

every side; or another sleeping on the top of a mast in a temptestuous sea: yet these are all situations of safety compared to the state of him who is hastening on to the close of life, without a thought of preparation for eternity! is ignorant of the corruptions of his nature; unconscious of his want of a Redeemer, and a total stranger to all the operations of Divine Grace in the heart! "Oh! that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end," (Deut. xxxii. 29.)

But for you whom God in mercy hath awakened from these mortal slumbers, as you can never sufficiently admire and adore the riches of His grace, so neither can you sufficiently endeavour to improve them. Never lose sight, I beseech you then, of these unspeakable mercies. "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged," (Isa. li. 1.) And Oh! while viewing the divine hand, as stretched forth with such freedom of grace, and such unmerited favour to save; how must the question burst forth involuntarily from the soul of every awakened believer, as it did from the astonished disciple: "Lord! how is it that Thou hast manifested Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John xiv. 23.) How indeed shall such a distinguished act of sovereign grace be acknowledged, or ever repaid! "Go on then in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of his righteousness only," (Psalm lxxi. 16.) And while prosecuting the path of duty with such holy caution as becometh saints, and continually praying for an increase of grace, and that you may abound more and more in the fruits thereof, forget not to drop a petition for them, who are too careless and unconcerned to pray for themselves, that "God may give them also repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and

to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," (Acts xx. 32.) "And may God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make you increase and abound more and more in love one towards another, and toward all men, to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness," (1 Thess. iii. 11, 12, 13.)

To the Eternal Father, to the uncreated Word, and the Eternal Spirit, Three Divine Persons in One and the same Essence, be ascribed all possible glory, might, and praise, throughout all ages, for ever. Amen.

LECTURES

ON THE

PERSON, GODHEAD, AND MINISTRY

OF

THE HOLY GHOST;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF SIX DISCOURSES

DELIVERED AT

THE MORNING AND EVENING LECTURES,

IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

PREFACE.

It is now somewhat more than *twenty years* since I first sent forth into the Church of Christ a Volume of Sermons on the Godhead and Operations of the Holy Ghost.

That work was written on rather a large scale, being intended for the more immediate use of such whose leisure and ability might afford much opportunity for study.

The *present* is on a more limited plan, having in view that class of readers whose time and occupation admit not of such indulgences. And more especially I have in it an eye to the labouring part of the poor of the Lord's people, among whom it hath pleased the great Head of the Church to permit the exercise of my feeble ministry for near *forty years*. And I feel no small comfort in the assurance, that a people so near and dear to me in the tenderest of all ties, and formed into a friendship of an endless and indissoluble nature, will receive this little work as among the last and best of the services I can render them. Indeed, I cannot but cherish the hope that the Lord will bless it to their souls; and that what they have so often received with affection, as it came warm from the heart, will be no less kindly regarded by them when the Writer shall lay cold in the grave, and both tongue and pen, with him, shall have ceased their offices for ever.

I confess also, that I am not a little anxious to leave this testimony with the Church, (how small soever it may be in

itself) to the glorious truth of the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the ETERNAL SPIRIT.

I am now fast hastening toward the boundary of time. With this great world, and all its dying interests, I shall very shortly have no more concern than those who lived before the flood. According to the course of nature, I can have but a little space to fill in, before that I shall go hence to be no more seen. The tide of that vast flood of eternity is rolling on with its mighty waves towards me, and must shortly reach the shore whereon I now stand, and will take me into its bosom. And if I know any thing of my own heart, I am on the look-out for my Lord's coming, with more joy than they that watch for the morning: yea, I say, "with more joy than they that watch for the morning." "For I know whom I have believed; and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Like the church of old, I can and do say, "Make haste, my beloved, until the day break, and the shadows flee away." In the meantime, while remaining in the body, and standing on this isthmus of time, I would fain gather together the few fragments of life which remain from my poor labours, and leave them behind me as a love-token to the Church of Jesus.

And I am the more prompted to this service, from contemplating the present awful day of the world. Surely the "last days" and the "perilous times," so expressly spoken of by the Spirit, are come, (1 Tim. iv. 1.) The flood-gates of heresy are broken up, and are pouring forth their deadly poison in various streams through the land. In a more daring and open manner the denial of the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the HOLY GHOST, is come forward, and indicates the tempest to follow. In such a season it is needful to contend, and that "earnestly, for the faith once delivered unto the saints." Now in a more awakened manner ought the people of God to remember the words of Jesus, and "to hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

I shall not offend I hope, if I add, (for I speak it with unfeigned thankfulness and humility of soul) that what I here present to others, through grace, I live upon myself. The bread which I hold forth to them, is the same which I eat. The weapons of warfare here taken from the divine armoury, I have fully proved. And like the faithful spies returning from the promised land, with the delicious fruits of the country in their hands, by way of invitation to their brethren to go up to the possession of it with them; so do I hold forth "the truth as it is in Jesus," more blessed than all the good things of Canaan. With the beloved apostle I would say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," (1 John i. 1.)

Reader! I offer this little work upon the knee of prayer, that the Lord's blessing may accompany it to the Lord's people. Holy and Eternal Spirit! vouchsafe to make known by it, to the souls of the redeemed, thine own divine Person and Godhead, in the gracious ministry of thine own divine power. So will our knowledge of thee be found, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Amen. (1 Cor. ii. 13.)

ROBERT HAWKER.

Plymouth, Charles' Vicarage,
Close of the Year 1817.

LECTURE I.

At the entrance on the very solemn and interesting subject which I have proposed to myself in these Lectures, I venture to assume for a principle, what none but the most hardened infidelity will be disposed to dispute; namely, that as Jehovah, by his very nature and essence, is, and must be, infinite, invisible, and incomprehensible; there can be no other revelation of him, but what he himself hath condescended to make. This surely is a point unquestionable. For to every inquiry, unauthorised of God, and unfounded in divine teaching, that solemn demand, in the book of Job, meets us at every step we take: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job xi. 7.)

And with this conviction on the mind, I venture to advance yet further, and to observe that as all the revelation Jehovah hath made of himself must be from himself, and so perfectly correct that there cannot be mixed with it the least shade of error; so the whole of what he hath condescended to make known is contained in the scriptures of eternal truth. This I assume also for a principle, that every one who admits the bible of God for the unerring standard of decision (and it is with such only I have at present to do) will as readily join issue. "Search the scriptures," said our Lord, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me," (John v. 39.)

But while I say this, let me not be misunderstood. Though I appeal to the word of God as the only standard

of decision concerning the knowledge of God, it will not be supposed that I mean thereby to supersede the necessity of divine teaching. Not so, I hope. "To the law and to the testimony" we are commanded to refer, in confirmation of the truth of God, and "if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," (Isaiah viii. 20.) But it is also among the sweetest promises of the Bible, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," (Isaiah liv. 13.) And our adorable Lord makes this the criterion of our right apprehension of him; "It is written (saith Jesus) in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me," (John vi. 45.)

Premising these things at the threshold of our subject, it may now be marked down, as from the platform of the whole, this one general *postulatum*, founded in scripture, and to which common sense doth, with equal readiness, subscribe her seal;—I mean the certainty of the Being of Jehovah. "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," (Heb. xi. 6.)

Advancing step by step in the contemplation of this infinitely great and glorious God; I go on to observe, that, connected with this faith of his Being, there must be also no less connected with it, the belief of the unity of his divine nature. For although (as will hereafter be very fully made to appear, when we come to that part of the subject) this great and glorious God, as might well be supposed, hath his Being in a way and manner peculiarly his own; so is he distinguished from all his creatures in a Trinity of Persons; and yet, at the same time there is no division in the unity of his essence. Three in Persons, yet but One in GODHEAD. One, and but One, in a community of nature, in all divine perfections, sovereignty, will, power, and glory; yet, in manifestations, there are Three Persons in that GODHEAD,

plainly revealed in scripture, and as plainly made known by special acts of grace to his people, and distinguished by names of the most interesting nature, called, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Let the reader pause one moment before he proceeds further. And let him recollect what was before said; that as all revelation made of Jehovah can only be by Jehovah; and as this revelation, both of the unity of the divine essence, and of a trinity of Persons in that divine essence, comes to us from the same authority; most sure and certain it is, that both are equally true; and both equally alike demand the belief and cordial acceptation of the people. And without all question, on the supposition that those infinitely great and momentous doctrines are the solemn and unalterable truths of the bible; it will as undeniably follow, that in the spiritual knowledge and enjoyment of them must consist the blessedness both of "the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Let us begin with the first of these;—the unity of the divine essence.

Both testaments of scripture correspond in this great truth. In the Old testament we find these sublime expressions: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord," (Deut. vi. 4.) "Is there a god besides me? Yea, there is no god: I know not any," (Isaiah xliv. 6, 8.) And again. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," (Jerem. xxiii. 23, 24.)

To the same purport is the language of the New testament. "He is the blessed and only Potentate; King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality," (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.) "The King eternal, immortal, invisible; the only wise God," (1 Tim. i. 17.)

Thus in terms the most sublime and magnificent, do

we find throughout the whole scriptures, the unity of the divine essence asserted. Indeed in the *former*, the glorious truth is not only laid down, as in the *latter;* but Jehovah himself is revealed as challenging all his creatures to the conviction of it. "Is there a god beside me?" As if the Lord had said, Had there been a god beside me, I, omniscient as I am, must have known him; and, possessing immensity, as I do, I must have met him; and, sole and absolute monarch as I am, inhabiting eternity, I must have discovered this competitor for sovereignty. "But there is no god; I know not any." And if *I* know not any, there can be none.

It is remarkable that the Jews of old time, when speaking of Jehovah, because they would not take that sacred name in vain, were accustomed to make use of the word *Makom* (that is, *place*) in allusion to him. By which they meant to say, that as, by his very nature and essence he inhabiteth eternity; so he must be every place. His centre every where; and his circumference no where. No place, therefore, could be void of his presence; neither any where could it be said, the Lord is absent. What a sublime conception this affords (however impossible to be explained to the apprehension of human faculties) of "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy!" (Isaiah lvii. 15.)

We next proceed to the revelation made in the same scriptures concerning the mode of existence of this glorious Being, namely, in a trinity of Persons; and distinguised by names peculiar to each, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And here again, before I prosecute the subject further, in bringing forward the scripture proofs to this doctrine, I would call upon the reader to pause with me, and attend to this one consideration. Yea, I would appeal to the common sense of mankind upon the occasion while I propose this question.—Supposing that we had never to this hour heard of the bible, or received a

single revelation concerning the being and nature of God; and supposing that now for the first time, the Lord in infinite condescension was about to make some revelation of himself; should we not expect, that, when the discovery was made, we should find him, in relation to the mode of his existence, wholly distinguished from all his creatures? Would it not, I say, be the very first impression on our minds, that an eternal line of distinction would be found marking his manner of being and existence from ours?

Here then it is. The word of God comes forward to make known what, without that revelation, never could have been known by us; namely, that Jehovah, though one, and but one, in nature and in essence, and in all the perfections which constitute GODHEAD; yet is Three Persons in that GODHEAD, indivisible, and equal in glory, majesty, and power.

The scriptural proofs of this sublime, mysterious doctrine, becomes the next department in our subject to bring forward.

And *first*, to begin with the *names* by which each glorious person in the GODHEAD is distinguished and known.

We find the glorious and incommunicable name of Jehovah ascribed to each and to all the holy Three throughout the bible. And as this is a name which implies self-existence, independence, and the everlasting being of Jehovah, incapable of being said of any creature; so doth it most fully demonstrate that He of whom it is said is only "the most highest over all the earth."

And as it is equally applied to the person of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, nothing can more decidedly prove that a community of nature, essence, and being, must subsist between the three persons; and that each equally and jointly partake in all the sovereignty and glory of the GODHEAD.

Some have thought that Jehovah is an hemantic noun, formed from *Hayah*, he was; by prefixing the *yod*, and which thereby denotes a proper name; the word itself being expressive of the eternity of Jehovah. Others have considered it as a compound; *Jah*, to intimate the essence of the GODHEAD, and the participle *Hovah*, the eternity of his existence. But in either sense, the meaning is one and the same. We meet with the name *Jah* twice in the Bible, Ps. lxviii. 4, and Isa. xii. 2. And once the name Ehjah, Exod. iii. 14. But all have the same import, and are expressive, as far as language can express, of the self-existence, eternity, and immutability of Him, whom the New testament writers, in the Greek tongue, describe under terms equally sublime, "which is, and which was, and which is to come: the Almighty!" (Rev. i. 8.)

But what I have more immediately in view, is not to dwell so much upon the meaning of the glorious name of Jehovah, (for that is very generally understood) but to prove that it is made use of in common by the sacred writers in reference to all the Persons in the GODHEAD. In proof I refer the reader to the following scriptures.—To the person of the Father, Psalm cx. 1; Isa. xliii. 5, 6, 8; xlix. 1, 8; Jer. xxxi. 1—3, &c. To the person of the Son, Isa. lx. 6; Jer. xxiii. 6; Zech. ii. 11; xii. 8—10, &c. To the person of the Holy Ghost, 1 Sam. xvi. 13; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Isa. xi. 2; lxi. 1—3; Ezek. viii. 1—3, &c. And to the three persons together, in many scriptures, such as Num. vi. 24, 25, 26; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3; Isa. xlviii. 16, 17; lxiii. 7—10, &c.

To this proof, arising from the glorious and incommunicable name of Jehovah, (impossible to be applied to any creature, being expressive of self-existence and eternity) equally used in common by each person of the GODHEAD; we derive another most decisive testimony to the same doctrine, when we find it also joined with

nother glorious name, ALEHIM, descriptive also of the ODHEAD. And this is the more striking, because ehovah is in the *singular* number, (and indeed hath no lural) being expressive of the unity of the divine ssence; and when joined, as in numberless parts of the cripture it is, with the word ALEHIM, which is *plural*, othing can be more satisfactory to the great truth efore us, that JEHOVAH ALEHIM hath his being in a rinity of persons.—Hence the translators of our bible niformly render the holy names, whenever they are oined together, the LORD GOD.

And in further confirmation (if further confirmation e needed) we find the glorious name of Jehovah not nly joined with the plural Alehim, but with other words of adjectives, pronouns, and verbs plural. A hing the Hebrews could never have done consistent with the rules of grammar, but for the purpose of proving thereby, what all the other parts of scripture concur in, that Jehovah, though but one in the inseparable and undivided essence of the GODHEAD, is nevertheless at the same time existing in a trinity of persons. In confirmation of those grand truths, I beg the reader to consult the following scriptures.—Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; xx. 13; xxxi. 7, 53; xxxv. 7; Deut. iv. 7; v. 23; Josh. xxiv. 19; 1 Sam. iv. 8; 2 Sam. vii. 23; Isa. vi. 8; Jer. x. 10; xxiii. 36; Prov. ix. 10; Eccles. v. 7; Job v. 1; Isa. lxii. 5; Hosea xi. 12; Mal. i. 6; and especially Eccles. xii. 1, where the word is plural, *Creators;* Isa. xliv. 2, "the Lord thy *Makers;*" Isa. liv. 5, "thy *Makers* is thine husband;" Ps. cxlix. 2, "let Israel rejoice in his *Makers.*"

Let the reader ponder these things with due attention, and next proceed to the consideration of the *Attributes* which distinguish GODHEAD; and here he will find every one of the holy persons in Jehovah alike in possession of them.

For example, the *Omnipresence* of God. We find

this perfection applied to the Person of God the Father, (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.) God the Son is equally said to be the "fulness that filleth all in all," (Eph. i. 23.) And no less the everlasting presence of God the Holy Ghost is declared in that sublime scripture, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I go from thy presence? (Psalm cxxxix. 7.)

In like manner *Omniscience* is another distinguishing perfection of God. And we find this also equally ascribed to the holy Three in One. "No man," saith Christ himself, "knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him," (Matt. xi. 27.) But that God the Holy Ghost exerciseth the same knowledge, and that this divine perfection is his also; Paul tells us "that the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God," (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

Is *Holiness* an attribute peculiar to God? Then do we find it equally ascribed to each of the Persons in Jehovah. To the Father, Isa. lvii. 15; John xvii. 11. To the Son, Acts iii. 14. And to the Holy Ghost, 1 John, i. 20.

Is *Eternity* said to be inhabited by the Father? (Isa. lvii. 15; 1 Tim. i. 17.) So is Jesus Christ said to be the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8.) And no less is the Holy Ghost described in the eternity of his being, for it is one of his glorious names; "The eternal Spirit," (Heb. ix. 14.)

In short it would be little less than running through the whole bible, to select proofs of the essential attributes which distinguish the GODHEAD, being in common possessed by each glorious Person in Jehovah. The *Sovereignty* of the Father is declared, in that "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," (Eph. i. 11.) We find the Lord Jesus declaring *his will* on one of the most blessed purposes concerning his Church, (John xvii. 24.) And we know that the whole department

in the gifts of grace is with God the Spirit, "who divideth to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.) *Wisdom* is so essential an attribute of GODHEAD, that in reference to the Father, it is said, that "there is no searching of his understanding," (Isa. xl. 28.) God the Son is by way of emphasis called, "the only wise God our Saviour," (Jude 25.) And it is one of the well-known names of God the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, (Isa. xi. 2.)

So much for this part of scriptural evidences arising from the *names* and *attributes* possessed in common by the Three Persons in the GODHEAD, in the one glorious essence of the divine nature.

In further testimony of this sacred truth, let us next go on to consider the proofs of the same, as they arise from the exercise of such divine *Acts* as define both person, and the distinction of persons in the GODHEAD, and which we find clearly manifested in each and every one of the holy Three in One in the undivided essence of Jehovah.

As first, the holy Persons in many parts of scripture are discovered conversing with each other on a variety of occasions. As, for example, at the creation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," (Gen. i. 26.) "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us," (Gen. iii. 22.) At the building of the tower of Babel, "Let us go down and there confound their language," (Gen. xi. 7.)

Similar passages of ALEHIM *plural*, with *singular* verbs, &c. Gen. xx. 13; xxxi. 7; Exod. vi. 3; Deut. iv. 23, &c. In the vision which Isaiah saw, he heard the "voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And he heard it said, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not," &c. (vi. 8—10.)

If it be said that these and similar passages to the same amount, do indeed prove a plurality of persons in the GODHEAD, but do not define each particularly; I

answer, these are definable by other scriptures compared with them. For example: in this vision of the Prophet, when he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?" we have reason, according to the analogy of scripture, to conclude, that this was the voice of God the Father. For in the economy of grace, it is the Father's personal act to *send;* but never to be *sent.* And in the *us* which follows, "who will go for us?" we may safely include both God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, with God the Father. For that God the Son was included, John the apostle fully proved in after ages, when referring to this vision. "These things said Esaias when he saw his glory and spake of him," (John xii. 41.) And equally are we sure that God the Holy Ghost was the almighty speaker at this vision; for Paul confidently decided this, when in his preaching, and in reference to this very scripture, he said, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers; saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand," (Acts xxviii. 25, 26.) If this most striking scripture, explained as it is to us by scripture, doth not carry conviction to the mind, of the distinction of persons in the GODHEAD, I should despair of ever obtaining belief to any one matter of fact upon earth. For surely a more plain and palpable testimony can never be given.

I shall however have occasion hereafter to bring forward a great variety of proofs to the personality of the Holy Three in the GODHEAD, when I come to speak more immediately to the person and ministry of God the Holy Ghost. But the limits of a single Lecture, and that only an introductory one, will not admit at present of enlarging.

One point however in proof I cannot suffer myself to conclude without bringing before you, and which, independent of any other, is in itself an unanswerable decision to the point in question; namely, of the per-

sonality of each of the Holy Three in the GODHEAD. If indeed I can make it appear to you, (as that I fully can) that there are acts testified in scripture, as distinct in each Person, and performed by each, which cannot be applied indiscriminately to all; but are the special and peculiar acts of him, in the covenant of grace, of whom they are spoken; then must it follow, that while Jehovah hath being in the One, inseparable and undivided essence of the GODHEAD; yet is that being most plainly and clearly proved to consist in a trinity of persons.

Now let the reader attend to one or two proofs in point; in which, if the film of determined ignorance doth not blind his eyes, he will perceive that such things are spoken of the acts of *one* person in the GODHEAD, in the economy of salvation, which are never said of either of the other *two;* but define the special and peculiar acts of each, according to the blessed revelation by Jesus Christ.

For example. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, (saith Jesus, speaking of the Holy Ghost) he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me. He shall receive of mine," &c. (John xvi. 13, 14.) Now observe. *First*, here are acts which define the person of the Holy Ghost. He is said to *guide*, to *hear*, to *speak*, and to *shew;* all which are personal acts. *Secondly*, he is said not to speak of *himself.* Now this defines his person from that of God the Father. For God the Father is as expressly said to do all things of himself, and "to work after the counsel of his own will," (Eph. i. 11.) Moreover he is said to *receive* of Christ. This is never spoken of the Father, in any part of scripture. And *thirdly*, here is the glory of Christ the great object for which the Holy Ghost is said to minister, and which shews no less the distinct personality of the Son of God, in what is here said, from the person of the

the Father, and the person of the Holy Ghost. And who doth not, or will not see from hence the clearest testimony language can furnish of Jehovah existing in a Trinity of Persons, defined as each is, by personal acts, distinct from each other.

Once more. We read (Rom. viii. 26, 27,) "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Here again observe. *First*, here are acts as plainly definable of person in the Holy Ghost, as words can shew. *Helping* our infirmities, and *making intercession* for us, are as much personal acts in the Holy Ghost upon earth, as the intercession of Christ proves his person in heaven. *Secondly*, this making intercession for us in our hearts, most decidedly draws the line of distinction between the Holy Ghost's personal agency and the Father's. For it is never once said throughout the word of God, of the Father's interceding. And, *thirdly*, in this scripture here is beautifully brought into one point of view, the grace and mercy of the Holy Three in One, in tenderness to us. The Spirit maketh intercession in us here below, while Jesus maketh intercession for us above; and both in exact unison with each other, and "according to the will of God." Reader! what think you of this evidence of the distinct Persons in the GODHEAD? And what views have you of the condescending love of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, in taking such gracious means to manifest it? Can any thing more palpably prove *both;* or at the same time more sweetly encourage poor fearful souls, when going to the court of heaven, and not knowing what to pray for as they ought, than by shewing that their petitions are sure to be heard, because each Person in the GOD-

HEAD is engaged for them? I detain the reader over this verse of scripture to remark to him, the very great beauty of the word *helping* our infirmities. It is, (*sun-antilambanctai*) *heaving with us;* meaning, as a kind hand lifts up a burden too heavy for a man himself to raise up and put upon his shoulders; so the Spirit is said to *help us*, that our weakness in prayer may not be so much felt, being thus divinely assisted. Such is this comprehensive word; and it is indeed a very blessed word to this purpose.

I shall find opportunity hereafter to exemplify yet more, this distinction of persons in the GODHEAD, in the most luminous and decided manner, when I come to speak more immediately to the personal ministry of God the Holy Ghost. But the limits of one Lecture will not at this time favour the pursuit.

I would therefore in the mean time take occasion from what hath been said, to beg the reader to pause with me, and allow me to make one short observation upon the whole. It is not indeed confined to that part only of the evidences he hath had already brought before him, but belongs to the subject at large, and is such as ought to be always in our remembrance, as often as we contemplate the glorious, though mysterious, doctrine of the Unity of the Divine Essence, consisting in a Trinity of Persons.

There is in every man, by nature, a pre-disposition to revolt at mystery. And the doctrine of Jehovah having being in a Trinity of Persons, is what the natural man, untaught of God, cannot receive, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) And beside the natural bias of the human mind to reject this great truth, the very circumstances of mankind are unfavourable also to it, because there is nothing in nature, neither in all the creatures of God, which bear the smallest correspondence to it. We are so much in the habit of considering persons and things as they simply appear to us, in their identity and separation

from one another, that when the scriptures reveal the peculiar mode of existence by which Jehovah is distinguished in a trinity of persons, though this refers to the GODHEAD himself, still nature untaught of God, pauses at the account.

We shall, however, (if brought under divine teaching) find great relief to correct this propensity to err; and, on the contrary, be blessedly disposed to the cordial reception of this revealed truth, in relation to the Trinity of the Persons in the GODHEAD, if we consider, and always keep in remembrance, that when the word of God speaks of three Persons in Jehovah, this *distinction of persons* doth not mean (as it must be in creatures) *separate and distinct existences*. It is not a different being, but personal distinction only in that being; perfectly foreign to all possible resemblance in creatures. Each Person hath in common equal participation in all that constitutes GODHEAD: and though distinguished by personal acts, which plainly define person; yet one design, one will, one purpose, one decree, is in each, because the essence of each is one, and though three in persons, yet but one God.

It is not only the poverty of language, but the weakness of apprehension in us, that renders this and every other subject of a divine nature, so difficult to be taken into the human mind. We are creatures accustomed to walk by sight more than faith. We are so occupied with things of sense, that we can only for the most part form our judgment by things of sense. But were we on this sublime subject to take our information wholly from revelation, and listen to what the scripture asserts, that though the gracious love tokens made known to us by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are the love tokens of three persons, and yet but one and the same God; what is there should prompt the mind to call in question the reality of this blessed truth, merely because our finite capacities find themselves incompetent to explain what is infinite.

We certainly are not so querulous, nor disposed to question every thing we meet with in *nature;* though numberless operations we are exercised with in this department are as little understood by us as the exercises in *grace.* The sun (for example) we all consider as one, and but one source and fountain of life, light, and heat. No man ever felt himself disposed to doubt but that that immense body is the parent of the whole of these. And are not these properties in the sun so many and distinct actions from one and the same agency? And wherefore, if this servant of Jehovah hath a power given it of imparting distinct acts, and yet in substance is but one and the same, shall it be too wonderful to be believed, that He who made and placed that great orb of the day in the firmament, and gave it all its powers, doth himself exist in a Trinity of Persons, and reveals himself in such gracious acts of natural and spiritual life, and light, and heat, as result from the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost?

Just let me detain the reader to add this one word. Is not the adoration, love, and praise, the child of God feels his soul drawn out in, towards each glorious Person in the GODHEAD, the most suited and becoming? While he keeps in view the Unity of the Divine Essence, in this Trinity of Persons; and while looking up to the Father, Son, or Spirit as One, he blesseth and praiseth the Three in One, in all the glories of Jehovah! Can he forbear, or ought he to withhold the tribute of praise to each for his unspeakable gift? If the man who is conscious of being "called out of darkness into God's marvellous light;" and from *the day dawn* and *day star* having arisen on his mind at the new birth, traceth the work of the Spirit to the love of the Spirit, the redemption by the Son, to the grace of the Son, and to the everlasting love of the Father, in having "chosen him in Christ before the foundation of the

world;" if he were silent in acts of praise and love to each glorious Person in the GODHEAD, would not the very stones of the earth cry out? Oh! how truly blessed is it personally to know, and as personally to bless each, and the Holy Three in One, Israel's God in covenant, as the united source of all our mercies!

And now let the reader pause, and ponder well, what hath been brought before him. Let him take a solemn and leisurely survey of the several proofs which he hath heard in testimony of the great doctrine contained in this Lecture. Let him as solemnly and as carefully remember, that all that is here offered is wholly scriptural. And when these momentous truths have passed, and repassed over his mind, in solemn consideration, let him look up for grace to feel the full force of that ponderous word of scripture, once delivered by Moses, the man of God, to Israel, "that thou mayest fear the glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God!" (Deut. xxviii. 58.)

And let me not offend, while I desire only to be faithful. Let me be kindly and affectionately heard, while I pray as kindly and affectionately to speak. This fundamental doctrine of our holy faith is not brought before you to ask your opinion; but the bible of God proclaims it to demand your belief. It will be at your peril if now, having heard it, you wilfully reject such great salvation; it will not be the inquiry of the other world what meets your approbation in this: but the solemn decision of every one in that day, in respect to his everlasting state will be, whether he be a believer in the great truths of God or not.

And let me further observe, that in the present day of awful heresy, it is not enough to give the cold, unfelt, and unconcerned assent to the doctrine of the Trinity; nothing short of the warm, cordial, and lively consent of the heart, will profit before God.

May the God of all grace impress it upon every one whose heart the Lord shall incline to attend to the things of salvation, that the acknowledgment of the faith once delivered unto the saints must be, and will be in the saints of God accompanied with the heartfelt knowledge of him. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being brought into a saving acquaintance with Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons; in knowing, feeling, and enjoying God the Father in his everlasting love; God the Son in his redeeming grace; and God the Holy Ghost in his communion and fellowship.

Brethren! bend with me the knee of prayer before the mercy-seat, that such blessed effects may accompany these labours. May that almighty Spirit, whose gracious work it is to lead into all truth, take of the things of Christ and shew unto us: that "Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God," (Eph. iii. 17th to the end.)

LECTURE II.

I HAVE often thought what a glorious display was made, for the confirmation of the faith, under the Old testament dispensation; when the prophet, in vision, saw the Lord on his throne, "high and lifted up, and his train filled the heaven." For here were the whole persons in the GODHEAD manifested. And the *Trisagium*, or thrice ascription of praise heard by the prophet at the same time, was in perfect correspondence to it." "Holy, holy, holy (they cried one to another) is the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah vi. 1—10.) See Lecture I. pp. 439, 440.

But it was a yet more full revelation, and of a more open display, which Jehovah made of himself, in his Trinity of Persons, when at the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ into his ministry, each of the Holy Three came forward at his instalment. Surely there never was a more positive and undeniable testimony given to any one truth, in defining personality, than that which was then displayed, of the Trinity of Persons in the GODHEAD, at the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jehovah burst asunder the heavens, and came forth in certain distinct tokens of personality, to the contemplation of the numerous beholders which were then on the banks of Jordan; as if to confirm to the Lord's people the blessed truth of "the Three which bare record in heaven; and which Three are One;" and at the same time to silence in darkness all who profess to take the New testament for their creed, and

yet by denying this fundamental truth do in effect "make God a liar, because they believe not the record which God hath given of his Son," (1 John v. 7—10.)

The evangelist is particular in the relation of this glorious event. These are his words: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Mat. iii. 16, 17.) Now observe,—Here is *first* spoken of the Son of God in our nature, coming up from the water: this identifies *his* person. *Secondly:* here is the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Christ, and this equally identifies *his*. And *thirdly:* the voice from heaven coming at the same time, and saying, "This is my beloved Son," could be no other than God the Father; and this as decidedly manifests *his*.

Reader! I beseech you to pause over this revelation from heaven, and mark it well. Observe where it stands, namely, at the very entrance of the Gospel. It forms what may be called the very title page of the whole book; and the title written, signed, and confirmed with Jehovah's own hand, by each of the persons in the GODHEAD, so that all that follows is stamped with this signature. It is Jehovah's own authority to his own words; and the man who neglects or despises this testimony from God himself, "neither would he be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

You will remember, that in my former Lecture I advanced so far into the subject as to shew you, and from scripture, that while the whole tenor of revelation, as with ten thousand tongues, bears testimony to the *Being of God*, and to the *Unity of the Divine Essence in that Being*, the same faithful and unerring records do as loudly proclaim that that essence consists *in a Trinity of Persons*. It is from the same authority we derive

both, and therefore *both alike* do equally demand our belief. Yea the very scripture which asserts the divine Unity, doth as plainly intimate the plurality of persons in that Unity. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord!" (Deut. vi. 4.) If there was not something more intended by these words than merely to express the Unity of the Divine Essence, surely it would have been needless for Israel to have been told that one is one. But if Israel all along had been used to understand that the ALEHIM, Israel's God, was thus spoken of in the *plural* number; lest Israel in the view of what was *plural*, might be tempted to overlook and lose sight of the Unity of the Divine Essence; then do we see the gracious design in this scripture of reminding Israel of it. And hence that other scripture is very full to confirm it. "And I appeared (saith the Lord) unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, (El Shaddai) but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them," (Exodus vi. 3.) Now here we find somewhat explanatory to the same effect. Israel must be reminded both of the plurality of persons in the GODHEAD, and no less of the divine Unity. "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah Alehim is One Jehovah."

In confirmation of this glorious truth, that lies at the bottom, foundation, and every security of all that is blessed in time, and blessed to all eternity; I have already shewn you, and that from scripture, that the holy Three Persons in the GODHEAD possess a community of nature, in all the sovereignty and glory of Jehovah. Each glorious person is alike called by the name Jehovah, which can never be applied to any mere creature, expressive as it is of self-existence, underived, and eternal. Of none can it be said but of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And of each it is said.

To this full and decisive testimony in relation to the *name*, was next added a short but comprehensive view

of the *attributes:* every one of which, as far as I thought it necessary to bring them forward in proof, you found them equally applied to each person in the GODHEAD.

From these *passive* witnesses, I then subjoined, from scripture, further proofs, which define Person by a view of *active* evidences, and shewed you that from the holy Three in One, *conversing* together, and *acting* conjointly together in certain operations in the covenant of grace, the Church of God is in possession of this part of witness also, to this fundamental article of our most holy faith.

Thus far my Introductory Lecture brought me in point of doctrine. I have now to follow up what was then necessarily left unfinished; in deducing, and from the same scriptural authority, some of the more prominent and unanswerable proofs to the personal distinction in the GODHEAD, while everlastingly keeping in view the Unity of the Divine Essence. My province will be to select them, as the word of God reveals them, and to bring them before you in a free, open, and unimposing manner. And your province will be to receive them with that reverence their vast importance demand. And may He, of whom I speak, give both to you and to me that apprehension and understanding in the view of them as none of the adversaries "shall be able to gainsay or resist."

I begin with the first given testimonies of this blessed truth at *creation;* for here are footsteps to be traced of Jehovah in his trinity of persons. Not that the marks and traces of his goings are so plainly to be seen as in *redemption;* nevertheless, the Lord hath not left himself without witness in what is called in scripture language, "In the beginning," (Gen. i. 1; John i. 1; 1 John i. 1.)

In the creation of our nature we find a conversation recorded, when the ALEHIM said, "Let us make man in

our image after our likeness," (Gen. i. 26.) And accordingly it is immediately added, "So God created man in his own image," (Gen. i. 27.)

But there is, in my view, one of the sweetest demonstrations to this act of grace in the holy Three which can be imagined, and which, if I mistake not, forms a striking analogy between the old creation in nature, and the new creation in grace, and proves the joint agency in both, of the whole persons in the GODHEAD.

In the old *creation of nature* we are told, that in the beginning, when the ALEHIM created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Now the apostle, speaking of *the new creation in grace*, refers to this scripture, and saith, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Here observe, that the whole Three Persons of the GODHEAD are all included in this scripture. *First*, he who moved upon the face of the waters at the *old creation*, and then said, "Let there be light," the same is He who is here said in the *new creation* to shine in the heart: hence, in both instances, it was one and the same, namely, the Spirit. *Secondly*, the effect is said to give "the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord," namely, God the Father, who is eminently called "the Father of lights," (James i. 17.) And *thirdly*, all this is said to be "in the faee of Jesus Christ;" for all revelation is made by, and in Him, (Gen. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 6; John i. 18; Heb. i. 2.)

But while we trace those precious marks in God's dealings towards his people at *creation*, no doubt it is in the department of *redemption* that we are to look for

the clearer footsteps of Jehovah in his trinity of persons. Here a divine light from heaven shines over the holy path in every direction, and such as leads to the "full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," (2 Col. ii.)

In our attention to this part of our subject, in order to trace it from its source, and follow it under the various demonstrations the word of God holds forth of personal agency in the holy Three which constitute Jehovah, it will be necessary to begin where God himself hath begun, and mark the several outlines of this blessed, but mysterious work, which Jehovah hath manifested to the Church all along, from before all time, and extending to all eternity:—and although in exploring a subject of such vast depths and dimensions, the scanty line of our finite capacities will reach but a very little way to fathom what is infinite; yet there is a gracious promise the Lord hath left on record for his people, which holds forth continued encouragements to our humble inquiries: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant," (Ps. xxv. 14.) Under this pleasing hope, and waiting at every step we take for Him whose Person, Godhead, and Ministry, we humbly seek to go before us, and to lead us into all truth, we may find cause to bless Him for what he hath made known unto the Church, of the "manifold wisdom of God."

Let us then begin at that part of the mysterious subject where God himself begins to us; namely, in beholding those sovereign acts of grace manifested by God the Father, which clearly define his Person and make known his eternal power and GODHEAD.

And here, without gathering, as might be done, a great cluster of witnesses, let us look but at a few, sufficient to the point before us.

Paul, in his epistle to the Church at Ephesus, thus

speaks: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," (Ephes. i. 3—6.)

Now pause and observe. Over and above what is here said of the Father's gift to the Church of all spiritual blessings, here are *three* distinct acts ascribed to Him *personally* as his own; namely, *choosing*, *predestinating*, and *accepting* the Church in Christ "before the foundation of the world." And let it not be forgotten, that as these are personal acts of the Father, so they are unqualified, without any one cause or condition, but the "good pleasure of his will."

I take it for granted, no man who admits the Bible for the charter of faith, will venture to set up a single argument of objection here. Every one of common sense must confess that these are personal acts ascribed to the Father, and as such fully prove his Person, and his eternal power and GODHEAD.

Let us next proceed to inquire, in like manner, for scriptural proofs in relation to the person of God the Son.

And *first*, before we quit the scripture just viewed, let it be observed, that those acts that there prove the personality of the Father, do as fully prove the personality of the Son. For if the Father chose the Church in Christ before the foundation of the world, evidently Christ's person is clearly defined for the Church to be chosen in. This is so plain as needs no comment. And I beg in addition to it to observe, as a further confirmation, that this choice of the Father is

said to be in Christ as Christ, not as the Son of God *only*, but as Christ; that is, God and man in one person. For although before the incarnation of the Son of God, in what is called in scriptural language the "fulness of time," the Son of God in no part of the divine word is said to have taken flesh and *tabernacled* among us, (as John phraseth it, John i. 14,) yet as the head of election in grace, he is said to have had "his goings forth from of old, from everlasting," (Micah v. 2.)

And however mysterious to our apprehension it may appear, yet certain it is, according to the prophets, "our Maker is our husband." And he is said to have betrothed the Church to himself for ever, (Isaiah liv. 5; Hosea ii. 19.) Now as betrothing is a personal act, so let it be observed, and observed with the due attention its importance demands, this betrothing of our nature is wholly ascribed to God the Son. In no one part of scripture do we ever read of God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost, having taken into union our nature. It is simply and singly spoken of in relation to God the Son. Hence, if this distinct act of God the Son doth not define person, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to say in what that proof can consist.

But we must not stop here. It is said in another scripture, as a collateral testimony to the Church being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that "grace was given us (that is, the Church) in Christ Jesus before the world began," (2 Tim. i. 9.) This *us* therefore (meaning the Church) somehow or other must have had being or representation in Christ as an head, for such acts to have taken place before the world began. And what difficulty is there to the apprehension of it, as far as it is proposed for an act of faith, though we have no faculties to explain it? We read that the whole of revelation in the Gospel is to "make known the mystery of God's will, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the

world began," (Ephes. iii. 9—11.) Might not the Son of God be supposed to personate himself and Church as God-man Mediator chosen, and the representative Head and Husband of it from everlasting? Yea, might he not then, as standing up before God and the Father in this character, receive all grace for his body the Church, though the events intended to be accomplished in that vast and mysterious dispensation were not to take place until ages after? Is there any thing improbable in this, or foreign to sound reason? Are there not elections in common life, where persons are chosen into office, and receive the honours belonging to that office, although the office itself is not immediately to be entered upon? Nay, do we not know that in the petty transactions of men with men, estates are often entailed, settlements made, and children for many generations provided for, though at the time those covenants are formed, the children interested in them are not only unknown, but unborn, and uncertain whether ever to have being or not upon earth? And shall it be thought incredible in divine transactions, that He who "knoweth them that are his, and calleth those things which be not as though they were;" shall He be the only One whose purposes may not be so arranged as to bring distant things present, and transact before the foundation of the world in intention, what he hath appointed to be afterwards accomplished in time? "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts," (Zech. viii. 6.)

Let us look further into this subject. The person of the Son of God is defined, by all those variety of scriptures which speak of him, as the Head of the Church from everlasting. It were too much to quote the whole. Take only a few.

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways before his works of old. I was set up from ever-

lasting," (Prov. viii. 22—31.) "Thou spakest in vision to thy holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty," &c. "Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," (Ps. lxxxix throughout.) "The first-born among many brethren," (Rom. viii. 26.) "The first-born of every creature," &c. (Col. i. 15—20.) "The Alpha and Omega; the first and the last." "The beginning of the creation of God," (Rev. i. 11. and iii. 14.)

Now pause over these and the like scriptures, and ponder them well. If we accept what is here said of the Son of God, as the head and husband of the Church, so chosen before the foundation of the world by God the Father, the whole is plain and intelligible; and as far as a subject, so necessarily mysterious, comes within the grasp of our apprehensions, there is nothing contrary to the conviction of faith. But without this view of the Son of God personating before time, what in time, when he came to be openly revealed to his Church in flesh, he would most surely be, there are no scriptural explanations to shew how He, who in his divine nature was, and is, and ever must be, "One with the Father over all, God blessed for ever, Amen," should be said to be made the "first-born," or "the beginning of the creation of God," and the like.

If with such views of the person of the Son of God, thus standing related to the Church before all time, as the chosen head and husband of his people, we attend to the several manifestations spoken of him in the Old Testament prior to his incarnation, we find increasing testimonies to throw light upon the subject as we go along. What are all those appearances he made to his saints in those ages; sometimes in the form of an angel, and sometimes in that of a man; but so many intimations that he then personated the character of Mediator, and under which he would shortly reveal himself openly?

My brother! examine and re-examine every one of these gracious manifestations the word of God records, concerning Christ, in relation to his people before his incarnation, and say under what other possible view can they be received, but as the Son of God personating what he then was, as chosen before the world; and what he one day would openly be, when coming as the Head and Husband, the Redeemer and Saviour of his Church, "the Lord our Righteousness."

Some men, however, unhappily mistaking such representations in scripture, and untaught of God the Holy Ghost, have fallen into dreams of their own imagination, and venture to propose I know not what sort of phantasy of the "pre-existence of the human soul of Christ prior to his incarnation." I shudder while I think of it. Nothing can be more awful than such presumptuous reasonings of the mind of man. It is a delusion of the most dreadful kind. It is wholly unfounded in the word of God. It is wholly unsupported by all revelation. Nay so directly opposite is it to all truth, that a single passage from the sacred oracles is enough to silence for ever such chimera of the brain, and cast into everlasting confusion the authors of such a daring heresy.

The Holy Ghost by Paul, in his epistle to the Church of Galatia, hath thrown to the ground the whole of this Babel-building at a blow; for thus it is written: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

Now observe. *First*, the Holy Ghost here declares, that it was "in the fulness of time," and not before, that God sent forth his Son. Of consequence, if the Son of God had a pre-existence in an human soul, from the foundation of the world, the whole intention of

sending forth his Son, in the fulness of time, to be made of a woman, would at once be done away.

Secondly, God sending forth his Son, in the fulness of time, to be "made of a woman," on the supposition that he had a human soul before, is foreign to the whole system of the prophecies concerning Christ's incarnation: and it would be impossible, under such a presumption, for this scripture to be explained, how he could, in that case, be said to be "born of a woman!" Do the advocates of such an awful doctrine mean to say, that when Christ was born of a woman he was born without an human soul, having one before? Or do they mean it should be understood, that notwithstanding this pre-existent human soul before, this became no prevention to the being born also of a woman? Or do they wish to be understood that Christ had *two* souls: one before the world, and another born of a woman in time? Is it not necessary for them, in order to give a little more consistency to their creed, to explain how this human soul of Christ, given they know not how, *before* the foundation of the world, became united with the complete human nature born in time, when born of a woman *in* the world? It is the positive language of scripture concerning Christ that "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," (Heb. ii. 17.) But how in *all* things, or in any *one thing*, could he be made like to his brethren, if before the world he had an human soul; which none of his brethren before their being in time ever had; and afterwards in the fulness of time he had an human body without a soul, which they were none of them born without? What likeness, or what relationship, would there have been between them?

Let us look at the subject a little more deeply, for more absurdities meet us at every step we take on this preposterous ground.

This scripture to the Church saith, that in the ful-

ness of time, God sent forth his Son "made of a woman." Blessed be God he did! For if Christ, as Christ, had not in his whole human nature been made of a woman, his Church would have had no relationship to him. The very first promise of the bible, which came in with the fall, concerning redemption, was, that the "seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." If therefore Christ be not of the seed of the woman, however fully he hath bruised the serpent's head, the Church could have no benefit in it. A pre-existent human soul in Christ bruising the serpent's head, would be nothing to me. It was the seed of the woman which was to do this. And if it be not done by that seed, I have no part, nor lot, in the matter.

Thirdly, this precious scripture saith, that not only He, whom God sent forth, was to be made of a woman, but "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." If therefore He to whom I have been taught, and by the Holy Ghost himself, to look with so much rapture as my Redeemer, was not made under the law, he can be no Redeemer of mine; for then the right of redemption is not his. He is no kin to me. (Levit. xxv. 25; Ruth iii. 11, 12; iv. 1—10.)

Hence therefore, on the supposition that the Son of God had a pre-existent soul, that soul was not made under the law, and can have no affinity to the Church. Hence the glorious doctrine of redemption is done away. To what a miserable state, if admitted, doth this reduce the Church of Christ!

And to add no more, (for I am tired of exposing such unscriptural presumptuous notions of men) how do persons of this complexion reconcile the doctrine of Christ "offering his soul an offering for sin:" and "pouring out his soul unto death," (Isa. liii. 10, 12.) Do they mean to say, that it was this *pre-existent soul* he offered? How could this soul, unborn of a woman, be liable to death? And in this sense what becomes

of those scriptures also which speak of a body being given him for this express purpose, that by "the offering of that body once for all, he had perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Heb. x. 10, 14.)

But now, if we turn from this phantasy of the human brain, and listen to the word of God; we are there taught, that the Son of God was chosen the elect Head of his Church from everlasting. And as such if we behold him, as we are taught to behold him, having glory in his mediator character before the world; this investiture implies, that though it was only in the fulness of time he was to come upon earth, and be made of a woman; and of consequnce, that human nature to be born of a woman, was never in heaven before his ascension; yet by virtue of Christ being the elect Mediator, the ubiquity of his GODHEAD, gave the representation of his mediatorship from everlasting, and, therefore, as he told Nicodemus, he came down from heaven, and was in heaven even while conversing with this ruler upon earth, (John iii. 13.)

There is nothing in this but what is scriptural; and, as far as our human capacities can apprehend divine truths, nothing but what is agreeable to the whole word of God. And when the fulness of time was come this glorious Personage, who from everlasting had stood up the elect Head of his Church, now comes forth made of a woman, by the united acts of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (Heb. x. 5, with Psalm xl. 6—8; Heb. ii. 16; Luke i. 35.) "God manifest in the flesh," (1. Tim. iii. 16.) And as the meridian sun of the lower world enlightens both the eastern and the western hemisphere at once; so Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, in the meridian of time, becomes the light both to the Old and New testament Church, in all the bright beams of salvation; and thereby manifests, that he is Jesus Christ: "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8.)

There is another beautiful confirmation of this blessed

truth, which the same scripture affords, and which not only throws to the ground every unscriptural reasoning of the human mind, in the phantasy taken up by some, that Christ had an human soul before his incarnation, but serves, at the same time, to illustrate still further, that glorious doctrine of our holy faith delivered by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians. The apostle having there set forth God the Father's choice of his Church before the foundation of the world; added, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," (Eph. i. 4, 5.)

Now what was there said, in this scripture, to the Church of the Ephesians, to have been predestinated by God the Father, is, in this scripture to the Church of the Galatians, declared to be *accomplished;* and, observe, *accomplished* by the incarnation of the Son of God. The same God and Father which predestinated "before the foundation of the world," sent forth his Son, to accomplish it in "the fulness of time." "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Now mark what follows, "that we might receive the adoption of sons." So that, though the Church had been from everlasting predestinated by the Father, to be adopted children in Christ Jesus; yet the incarnation of his dear Son, was the determined plan in God's mind, by which that adoption was to be *received* by the children. And but for the Son of God being made of a woman, this scripture decidedly shews that our adoption could never have been effected. For among the other causes assigned for the Son of God being made of a woman; this is as strongly declared, "that we might receive the adoption of sons."

If ever an error with which the Church of Christ was infested, received a full refutation from the scriptures of God, this, of the pre-existence of the human soul of

Christ prior to his incarnation, hath here found it in this blessed portion of Paul to the Galatians. And if any preacher or reader, before whose eyes these notes may come, who in time past may have fallen into this error, and hath candour enough to acknowledge the truth, it is but an act of justice to the Church of God that he do so. For what the apostle saith upon another occasion will equally apply here: "Let God be true; but every man a liar!" (Rom. iii. 4.)

I pass on to another glorious proof of the personality of the Son of God as manifested in his mediatorial character; namely, in acts of creation. And I confess, that I am the more anxious to accomplish this service, because the denial of it is among the features which mark the latter day heresies, (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2; 2 Pet. i. 3; Jude 3, 4.)

That the Son of God, considered in his mediatorship the elect Head of his Church, acted in joint agency in works of creation, is so plainly revealed in the scriptures as to leave no doubt. It is said not in one or two passages of questionable meaning, but in many of the plainest nature, and so plain that it is impossible to mistake them.

For example. In the opening of John's gospel we here read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made," &c. (John i. 1—14.)

That these acts refer to Christ as Mediator is evident from what is said in the following verses of his coming to his own, and the like. And added to these, a single verse in the Revelations confirms it most completely. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called, The Word of God," (Rev. xix. 11—16.) A vesture dipped in blood could be no other than the clothing of Christ.

Again. Paul, when speaking of the mystery hid in God, adds, "who created all things by Jesus Christ," (Eph. iii. 9.) Now Paul could not mean by this scripture, that the Son of God, only as God, created all things; for then he would not have called him Jesus Christ. The Church knew him not by this name until his incarnation, (Mat. i. 21.) Hence therefore this portion, like the former, is full in point.

Once more. The same apostle to the Colossians, after describing him as "the first-born of every creature," immediately adds, "for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth," &c. (See Col. i. 15—19.) Lastly, to add no more. In the epistle to the Hebrews it is said, that "by him God made the worlds, and that he upholds all things by the word of his power," &c. (Heb. i. 1, 3.) If the reader will look at those scriptures, he will discover that all that is here said is spoken of Christ, in his mediatorship, and not in reference to his GODHEAD only.

And what is there incredible in the account? Is creation a greater work than redemption? I trow not. No creature, simply as a creature, could accomplish it. Neither would the crown of redemption have been more suited to the head of any creature than that of creation. But if the Son of God, standing up as the elect Head of his Church before all worlds, goes forth in acts of creation, as afterwards in the fulness of time he did in redemption, what is there unsuited, or improbable, in the acts of both? (Heb. v. 4, 5.)

Moreover we are told that the final judgment of the world is committed unto Christ, because he is the Son of Man. Not because he is the Son of God; for in that case it could not have been *committed* unto him, as a delegated power, it being his own in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost: but because he is the Son of man! And surely it cannot be a mark of greater dignity, neither require more power, to *make* the world

than to *judge* the world. And as this delegation of judgment is expressly said to be given him, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" what can set forth his mediator crown more fully?" (John v. 21—27.)

He saith himself, that all power is given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him, (John xvii. 2.) That this is also spoken as mediator is certain, because it is said to be *given* to him. A gift, as Son of God only, could not, for the reasons before assigned, be said. And can the possession in himself, and power to give *eternal* life to others, be a less display of glory than the power of giving *temporal* life in creation?

And moreover when it be considered, that the final consummation of all things is said to be with the express design for "to gather together in One all things in Christ, even in him," (Eph. i. 10;) surely it is not possible to err when we follow scripture in ascribing to this *Mighty Him*, whom the Father delighteth to honour, and "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily," the joint agency in the departments of nature, providence, and grace; since the Father hath given him "to be the head over all things to the church, which is the body, the fulness of him which filleth all in all," (Eph. i. 22, 23.)

I have one word more to say to you on the Person of the Son of God as Mediator, and which, as far as relates to the Church, is as important as any.

If there be one truth of God confirmed to the Church by revelation in a more luminous manner than another, it is this; namely, that the Son of God by marrying our nature, hath conferred upon that holy portion all divine honours, and communicated to it all divine perfections. Our Lord's own words are enough in proof: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in

us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," (John xvii. 21, 22, 23, and throughout.) Hence therefore our union with him brings up after it the security of all our present and everlasting happiness. For not only our acceptation with Jehovah results wholly from our union *with* Christ, and our redemption *by* Christ; but also (and which is the most momentous consideration of all) our everlasting safety from the possibility of any future change.

Our nature, as creatures, would be always liable to change; yea and must change, even in eternity itself, if we had not somewhat to rest upon more than creature strength, or creature holiness. But as the human nature of Christ, from being taken into the GODHEAD, is necessarily immutable from that union; so our union with that nature of Christ, whereby we are one with him, preserves us also from all change. Hence therefore when a child of God, by regeneration, "hath all things given to him which pertain to life and godliness;" he is said "to be made a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," (2 Pet. i. 1—4.)

Think what an everlasting security results from hence to the Church, in Christ, to all eternity. And who that conceives the thousandth part of such infinite consequences of blessedness arising therefrom, would lose sight of it, for a moment, or relinquish the glorious thought for as many worlds!

My brother! Let no heresy of the day, no sophistry of human reason, tempt you to forego such views of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the greatness of his mediator character, as those scriptures you have seen, and multi-

tudes in the word of God beside, bring before you. And do not be led to conceive, that the ill-founded, unauthorized, and unscriptural opinion, of *the pre-existent human soul* of Christ, is giving glory to Christ, which robs him of the merits of his incarnation, and the souls of his people of their happiness. Neither be tempted by the false reasoning of others to suppose, that you exalt him too high, in ascribing to him what the Holy Ghost in his word hath ascribed to him, his agency in creation; while you hear God himself say, he shall be "exalted and extolled, and be very high," yea, "that every knee shall bow before him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

For while you give such glory to Christ, you give the glory at the same time to God the Father. For all Christ is, as Christ, he is by the election and predestination of God the Father. He is the Christ of God, the chosen of God. And while we hear Jehovah declare that "He will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images:" we hear Jehovah speaking of him at the same time in opposition to all images, as giving him "for a covenant to the people; his Elect in whom his soul delighteth," (Isaiah xlii. 1—8.) So that while making God the Father what scripture makes him, the first and predisposing cause in the Election of Christ; and *choosing*, *predestinating*, and *accepting* the Church in him; the proclamation from heaven in this choice runs in these words; that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him," (John v. 22.)

I come now to the inquiry in the scripture records for the testimonies concerning the Person of God the Holy Ghost. A subject of equal moment with those we have before reviewed in relation to the Persons of the Father and the Son. And indeed for the more

immediate inquiry into which I first entered upon these Lectures.

I shall be brief however in my present discourse, from having already exceeded in it the limits which I originally proposed, in investigation of the preceding points. And as the subject of the Person, Godhead, and Ministry, of the Holy Ghost, will occupy by far the greater part of all my subsequent Lectures, there will be the less reason to detain you now.

Let it for the present therefore suffice to observe, that the agency of the Holy Ghost, in the economy of grace towards the Church, is as large, and the proofs arising therefrom of his Person, Godhead, and Ministry, are as many, as those acts of the same grace which have been brought before you, in relation to the Person of the Father and of the Son. He hath in every instance, and upon every occasion, proved his personality, and manifested equal acts of love to the objects of his favour, in common with the other persons in Jehovah.

Indeed, though last mentioned to us in point of order, yet is he to us first in point of discovery, in all that relates to Jehovah's going forth in communion with his Church in Jesus Christ. For until that God the Holy Ghost hath quickened us, who are all by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," though *chosen* in Christ by God the Father, before the foundation of the world; and though *redeemed* by God the Son in time; yet can we know nothing of the love of either, until by the regenerating grace of God the Holy Ghost, "the day-spring from on high hath visited us."

His divine act first it is to quicken into spiritual life; to call from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God. Not an act of spiritual life can we perform, until the Holy Ghost hath quickened us into spiritual life. Not a promise can we plead, not a grace can we exercise, not a prayer can we offer, until that he hath breathed life into our souls, hath taught

us how to pray, and what to pray for. Yea no man can truly say in an heartfelt conviction of soul, "that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

And so equally great and important are the saving acts of grace, of God the Holy Ghost with those of the Father and the Son, towards the Church and every individual of Christ's mystical body; that there is a striking oneness in point of value, and as striking an equality in point of expediency with each, and with all. The acts of grace in one are necessarily to be followed by the acts of the others, and on the supposition of failure in either one (which is indeed impossible) the whole design would be lost. And what endears the whole, the acts of grace of each glorious Person once done, are done for ever. It was but one act in God the Father, when he *chose* the Church, and that once done was unalterable and everlasting. It was but one act of God the Son, when he *redeemed* the Church; for by "that one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." It is but one act in God the Holy Ghost when he quickens the soul into spiritual life, for the renewed soul can die no more. He is thereby made "a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," (2 Pet. i. 3, 4.)

But for the present I add no more. Only before I close I would look up and beg of Him of whom I speak, that he will graciously give his blessed influence in our hearts, and cause the words now delivered, as far as they are agreeable to his holy will, and are in conformity to his eternal truth, to have their saving effects among his people. Vouchsafe, gracious Lord, to do by us as thou didst in the household of Cornelius. "While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word!" (Acts x. 44.)

LECTURE III.

I DO not think it necessary to offer any apology for calling your repeated attention to the interesting subject proposed in these Lectures. It is in itself too vast in its eventual consequences to need any. It attaches itself to our first, our best, our highest, our nearest, yea, our only true and eternal interests. And dead, indeed, must that man be, to all spiritual and immortal concerns, who feels not alive to an inquiry which hath for its object all that can be deemed momentous in relation to the happiness "of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

When the part of our unconscious childhood is past, and the mind left to ruminate on the solemn events opening before us; finding ourselves, when taught by grace, in a lost, ruined, and undone estate by nature, through the Adam-fall transgression, if in mercy the Lord brings us into a state of grace, what a ray of the most glorious light shines in upon the soul in the manifestation of Jesus Christ. And when we are led on step by step through the mysterious subject, to the discovery of the whole persons of the GODHEAD, engaged in our present and everlasting welfare, the mind is overwhelmed in the vast contemplation; and as we trace the footsteps of the sovereign decree in the Father's love, the Saviour's grace, and the Spirit's fellowship, we feel constrained in every new manifestation to cry out with the apostle, "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

I know not how such things affect your minds; but I am free to confess, that, in my esteem, they are among the first blessings of life. For they not only open to our view the wonderful subject of God's love *to us*, but they awaken and call forth our love *to him*. When the Lord hath given grace in our hearts, there will be the going forth of the soul *after* Christ, as we feel the incomings of love *from* Christ.

And these things are all in exact correspondence to the whole system of faith. Baptized as we are in the joint names of the holy Three in One; and blessed as we are in their joint love and favour; the actings of faith being awakened with the first moment of regeneration, more or less are carried on through the whole life of the renewed soul until grace is consummated in glory. And hence the child of God may, and indeed he ought, to sing his song upon *Alamoth*, as the Old testament saints did, when the Lord had strung their hearts anew by sovereign grace, and to chant it all the pilgrimage through, "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

In the prosecution of our subject, at the opening of my *third* Lecture, I shall begin at the part where my former ended. You have now the substance of what hath been already delivered in the *two* preceding Lectures before you in print. I do not think it necessary to go again a single step over the ground I have trodden. Only here, as before, and in every remaining part of our way, I would humbly beg to adopt the words of the great apostle, and say to you, as he did to the Church, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may come unto you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed," (Rom. xv. 30—32.

According to the plan which was at first laid down

in the *syllabus* of these proposed Lectures, my present province will be to look over the word of God, and bring forward to your view, *some* of the more striking records of those divine *operations of the Holy Ghost on the person of Christ*, by which his Person, Godhead, and Ministry, are clearly defined. And although it cannot be supposed, from the secret and mysterious nature of those sublime transactions themselves, that our discoveries can go very far; (for here, if any where, "we see but as through a glass darkly") yet, it is "to the praise of the glory of God's grace," when taught by him, we see enough to form very clear conclusions, and to call forth continued thanksgivings to the God of all our mercies, for such manifestations as he hath been pleased to make of himself.

Our conscious dimness of perception, ought indeed, and I hope will, prompt us at every advance we make in the wonderful subject, to wait for the discovery of the going before us, as to the Church of old, of "the pillar of cloud," to direct us in the way. And sure we are, while Israel's God doth by us, as he did by them, go before by day, and in "the pillar of fire" follow us by night, "the glory of the Lord will be our rereward," (Exod. xiii. 21, 22; Isaiah lviii. 8.) Under his gracious teaching we shall get very blessed insights into these "things which are freely given to us of God," (1 Cor. ii. 12.)

Let it be remembered, that while the present Lecture hath for its special object the inquiry into the personal acts of the Holy Ghost in his unction of Christ; yet no less is it designed to keep in view those actions which equally define the Persons of the Father and of the Son. For, indeed, it is impossible to speak of the one without an eye to each of the other. And, after all, though the distinct acts of each other are sufficiently distinct to prove person: yet are they never so detached, but that the act of the one implies the will

and concurrence of each other; and mutually illustrate and confirm the oneness in purpose, decree, and pleasure, of the whole Three Persons of the GODHEAD. If we may presume, by way of illustration, to use similitudes, I would say, that the actions of the glorious persons of the GODHEAD are not unlike to the beautiful colours of the rainbow. They are blended in one, and yet distinct in each. The weakest eye, not totally void of vision, can plainly discover a diversity; while the strongest sight is not able to define where that diversity begins or where it ends. All form but one glorious and magnificent arch, which Jehovah hath set in the heaven as the token of his covenant faithfulness. Similar to which (comparing great things with small) the acts of grace in the holy Three Persons in the GODHEAD, though distinct enough to mark distinction; yet all are but one and the same in substance. Three distinct personalities, constituting one in unity of the Divine Essence.

And hence I cannot help remarking, that what becomes "a stumbling-block and a rock of offence" to the carnal and unregenerate, in the receiving this blessed truth; to the child of God ministers the more to the hearty confirmation of the faith. As for example, when we hear our Lord say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son," &c. (John v. 17—19.) These, and the like expressions, which appear full of perplexity to minds untaught of God, are perfectly intelligible to the humblest capacity of God's children. The Lord Jesus did not mean to imply any inability in himself in respect to the performance of all things, but that in all he did, it was in perfect correspondence to the will and pleasure of the Father, yea, the whole Godhead. For while distinct actions of each define each person; yet all are the will and pleasure of

the whole Three harmonizing in one and the same essence of Jehovah.

I beg that this observation may not be overlooked or forgotten all the way through as we prosecute the subject. For sure I am, it will not only help, under the divine blessing, to lead the mind to a right apprehension of many scriptures, which otherwise, in the first view of things might not be so clearly understood, but also become an effectual preservative against the poison of the several heresies which, according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost, will mark the latter day in opposing the Church.

In our inquiry into some of the more striking records which the word of God hath handed down to us of the operations of the Holy Ghost upon the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; it will be proper, in point of order, to begin with those which are in the Old testament scripture; and from thence pass on to the consideration of those under the New; for in both we find the plainest testimonies to the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; and which throw a light upon each other, and both minister together in confirmation of the doctrine.

The whole code of prophecy referred to the person of Christ. Indeed, it is said, "that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," (Rev. xix. 10.) And herein the personal agency of the Holy Ghost is at once defined and proved. For the word of God saith, that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation;" that is, none but the Author of prophecy can explain prophecy; "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Peter i. 20, 21.)

And what a vast mass of evidence is found, under this one branch of our subject, in proof of the agency of God the Holy Ghost on the person of Christ! "The

stone cut out without hands," which should become "a mountain and fill the whole earth," had a striking reference to him whose human nature was to be produced by the miraculous formation of his body in the womb of the Virgin. And as the glorious Head, so his members which were "predestinated to be conformed to his image," were to be circumcised "with the circumcision made without hands by the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 29; Col. ii. 11, 13.)

But amidst such mysteries respecting Christ, and his members, who, untaught of God, could have conceived a thought so wonderful as that in the forming of the fabric of the human nature of Christ, not only this stupendous edifice should be accomplished by the personal operations of God the Holy Ghost; but that each glorious person should concur in bringing forth him whose name is Wonderful?

For thus we read in relation to God the Father: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation," (Isaiah xxviii. 16.) And that the Lord Jesus himself bore part in the great design another prophet thus informed the Church: "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory," (Zech. vi. 12, 13.) And no less in reference to the same, of God the Holy Ghost. It is said by the same prophet, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," (Zech. iv. 6.)

And what is the plain, the honest, just, and fair conclusions from those scriptures, but that the whole Three Persons in the GODHEAD concurred in this mighty act? God the Father laid this foundation-stone of his Church in Zion. On his mysterious person who

is called the Christ of God, the whole superstructure of the Church rests. He bears "all the glory of his Father's house," who hath borne "all the sins of his people." And while he bears up their persons, and bears the whole government of his Church, yea, the whole creation *on his shoulders;* God the Spirit holds him up to his Church's view, in the elevation of his person, blood, and righteousness; and brings him home to the hearts of his redeemed, and forms him there "the hope of glory," (Isa. xxii. 24; liii. 6; ix. 6; Col. i. 27.)

But we must not stop here. While the whole *spirit of prophecy* is directed to this one purpose, in the grand department also of *the anointing of Christ*, we find no less all the vast apparatus in the Old testament dispensation ministering. All the services of the sanctuary in the continual anointing, are directed to shew forth the special object they all had in view, in the unction of Christ by the Holy Ghost. Nay, so immediately directed was the whole to his person, and the anointing of him so important by the Holy Ghost, that his very name of Christ wholly ariseth from it. He could not have been called Christ but for the unction of the Holy Ghost. The name by which the Old testament saints looked for him, *Messiah*, means *anointed.* It is taken from the Hebrew word *Mashach*, *he anointed.* And it is in exact correspondence to the New testament name, *Christos.* The *Targum* in numberless places described *him that was to come*, by his name, *Messiah.* And hence we read that when Andrew first related to his brother Simon the advent of the Lord Jesus, he expressed himself in these words: "We have found the Messias; which is, being interpreted, the Christ," (John i. 40.)

And there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, but that with an eye to the unction of Christ's person, all the anointings we read of in the Old testament of prophets, priests, and kings, the vessels of the sanctuary,

and the whole ritual of the tabernacle service expressly referred. Indeed the Holy Ghost began much earlier than when the Church was first formed in the wilderness after their Exodus from Egypt; for in the individual instance of the Lord's people we discover an early trace of this holy anointing, in the case of Jacob at Bethel, (Gen. xxviii. 18.) And who can ask after the cause, while reading of Jehovah, speaking to his Holy One in vision, and of having anointed him with his holy oil? (Psalm lxxxix. 19, 20.) Who can be at a loss for the substance of all shadows, while keeping in remembrance what Jehovah said of "his Anointed, when setting him upon his holy hill in Zion?" (Psalm ii. 2, 6.) It requires no great stretch of faith to behold in all the anointings under the law, and all the offices, regal, priestly, and prophetical, so many shades in reference to Christ. I stay not to quote the several scriptures at large, for these would fill pages; but I pray the reader to turn to them, as I have here marked them. First, *the holy oil*, divinely composed by the Lord himself, (Exod. xxx. 30, 31, &c.) Then look at the anointing of *Aaron* and his *sons* into the priestly office, (Lev. viii. throughout.) The *altar*, (Exod. xxix. 36.) The *tabernacle*, (Exod. xxx. 26.) The *laver*, (Exod. xl. 11.) Look at the consecration of the kings, *Saul*, *David*, *Solomon*, &c. (1 Sam. x. 1; 1 Sam. xvi. 13; 1 Kings i. 39; 2 Kings ix. 6.) Look at the anointing of the prophets, *Elisha*, (1 Kings xix. 16, &c.)

And what shall we conclude of the anointing of the vessels of the sanctuary but as a typical representations of the Holy Ghost's anointing the Lord's people in all ages of the Church, who are made "kings and priests unto God and the Father," and who are "vessels of honour unto the master's use," and of whom it is said, "be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord?" (Isa. lii. 11.)

There cannot be the suspense of a moment in tracing

the whole of the personal ministry of God the Holy Ghost; for a single verse in the epistle to the Hebrews decidedly shews it. I beg the reader, in confirmation, to turn to the ninth chapter of that blessed scripture. The apostle opens it with describing the tabernacle, and the second vail, and the furniture of both, with an account of the daily service of the priests, and the high-priests, once every year. He then ascribes the whole of the appointment in express words to God the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost (said he) *this signifying*, (Heb. ix. 1—8.) Let the reader pause if a doubt remains upon his mind after this palpable testimony, on this subject, in relation to either the Person, the Godhead, or the Ministry of the Holy Ghost. Here are, *first*, special acts described in appointing services in the tabernacle. *Secondly*, they are all declared to be ordinances of *divine service. Thirdly*, here was a *daily* ministering and an *an annual* one; both declared to be shadowy *ordinances of good things to come. Lastly*, here is in so many words expressly said, that it was the Holy Ghost *signified* his intention in the whole. I ask the man of common sense, what actions can define more fully both the Person, the GODHEAD, and the Ministry of the Holy Ghost? Who but one that is a *person* can have a will, purpose, design, and meaning? Who less than God can appoint *divine service*, or direct the *service of* God? And what can be called *ministry*, if such appointments and ordinations do constitute not it?

Oh! how blessedly did the prophets of old give testimony to the unction of the Holy Ghost! Daniel pointed to his ministry when predicting the advent of Christ, in which "the vision of prophecy would be sealed up;" and when "he would anoint the most Holy, (Dan. ix. 24.) And Habakkuk no less chanted the same, when speaking of Christ he thus said, "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people; even for salvation with thine anointed," (Hab. iii. 13.) And the

Church had long before both these prophets, sung her love song to her Lord, with an eye to his unction, when she said, " Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth," (Song i. 3.) Reader! what are your views of these solemn truths? What hath God the Holy Ghost taught you of them?

From the Old testament scriptures in proof of the Holy Ghost's Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry; let us now pass on to the New, and here we shall find the same precious manifestations, only in a more splendid and luminous manner.

The prophets under the Jewish dispensation, while looking forward to gospel times, had with one voice concurred in pointing to the coming Saviour, in language the most sublime; specially in relation to that point which I have now more immediately in view. The work of the Holy Ghost, in his unction of the person of Christ, is most striking. It opens with his incarnation, and pervades every part of our Lord's ministry.

Behold," (said the prophet) " a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. Which" (said the angel who explained it to the Virgin Mary, ages after) " being interpreted is, God with us," (Isaiah vii. 14, with Matt. i. 23. See also Isaiah ix. 6. Jer. xxxi. 22; Micah v. 2; Zech. xiii. 7, &c.)

In this wonderful and mysterious work of the formation of this marvellous God-man Emmanuel, the whole persons in the GODHEAD are revealed as having been engaged. The Son of God under the spirit of prophecy had spoken of the event a thousand years before it came to pass; and in reference to the agency of God the Father thus expressed himself; " For thou hast possessed my reins: thou has covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made," &c. (Read the whole passage, Psalm cxxxix. 13, 16.)

And of the Son of God himself it is said, " For

verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, (Heb. ii. 16.) Here let it be observed, this special personal act of God the Son, that he took not on him the nature of angels but the seed of man, is spoken of as an act of his own; his own will and pleasure. For the act implies that he might have taken the *one*, when he chose the *other*. And it further implies, not only his own personal act, choice, and pleasure, which determined him to the one rather than the other, but it implies yet further, that though God the Father had "prepared the body, or fitted the body," to speak in scripture terms, (Heb. x. 5, see the margin,) yet the uniting that body to his GODHEAD was his own immediate act. "For verily he took it." This is to me, I confess, a great point. I know not what views my reader hath of it. If ever any act of the Son of God proved his person, proved his GODHEAD, here it is proved, and that most blessedly. None but God himself could do such an act. And the Son of God doing it, and by that act taking into union with himself that holy portion of human nature, so formed and so constituted, and imparting to it divine perfections, manifests, as plain as terms can manifest it, both his own eternal power and GODHEAD.

But the point I am chiefly called upon by these Lectures to prove, is of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. And the miraculous conception and incarnation of Christ with which the New testament opens, make these truths shine as with a sunbeam.

When the angel came to announce to the Virgin Mary the subject of Christ's birth, he removed all difficulties and inquiries of her mind, as to the method of its accomplishment, by telling her, that "the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her; and therefore that holy thing which should be born of her should be called the SON

OF GOD." I pray the reader to turn to the account, and read the whole relation before he proceeds further, (Luke i. 28—38;) and then let him attend to what I am going to say. If there be a truth confirmed in scripture, this certainly is one. The Holy Ghost is here expressly said to have been engaged in this great act, in common with the Father and the Son. *Secondly*, the work engaged in, none but one who enjoyed in common with the Father and the Son the perfections of the GODHEAD could be competent to. Both these points cannot be denied by any one who takes the scripture for the standard of decision. Hence, *thirdly*, as the Holy Ghost is thus, without any reserve whatever, declared to have been thus engaged; and engaged in acts which none but God could engage in, his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry are as clearly defined and proved, as are the Persons, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Father, or of the Son.

Let this grand truth be marked down in terms equal to its importance, and then let us pass on to another proof of divine agency in the Holy Ghost; namely, in relation to his unction on the person of Christ.

I might here dwell particularly on the Ministry of the Holy Ghost, at the *baptism* of Christ. For if the baptism of the Spirit is so essential in every individual instance of the members of Christ's mystical body, that all ordinances without his baptism can be nothing worth in the sight of God, (Acts i. 5;) how important must it have been that God the Holy Ghost should have given his testimony by this act to the glorious Head. But as I have already, in the opening of my last Lecture (see Lecture II.) very clearly shewn the proof to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Spirit at the *baptism* of Christ, I think it unnecessary to dwell upon that part again.

The point now before us is of the Spirit's unction of Christ; and his *consecrating* and *anointing* Christ to his ministry is very fully in proof.

And here again, as before, we find all the persons in the GODHEAD engaged.

In allusion to the Father, Christ himself saith, "Him hath God the Father sealed," (John vi. 27.) But that this setting apart and consecrating to the Messiahship is no less the Son's own personal act, Jesus is heard saying, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," (John xvii. 19.) The words are (*Agiazo emauton,*) I consecrate myself. The Dutch annotations render the words, "I give up myself for an holy sacrifice." Not as if it meant making that holy, which had never been unholy; but the personal act of Christ himself in *self-dedication.* And while the hand both of the Father and of the Son is clearly revealed in this act of Christ's *consecration;* we hear the Lord Jesus expressly ascribing his ordination to the ministry personally to God the Spirit. The prophet, speaking in the person of Christ, had said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek," &c. And in Christ's first sermon in the Jewish synagogue, he read this scripture, and declared that the words were then fulfilled. (Compare Isa. lxi. 1, &c. with Luke iv. 16—24.)

And here I take occasion to observe the manner of expression made use of in the scriptures respecting the Spirit, when sometimes calling him the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord God, and the like. Some have conceived that these expressions rather militate against his person: but such views are for want of attention. The Spirit of Jehovah is, to all intents and purposes, Jehovah. For, if the Spirit did not, as one of the persons in the ALEHIM, possess all divine perfections, he could not be what he is uniformly called, God the Spirit. The Spirit *of* Jehovah, therefore, is synonymous to the Spirit Jehovah. And hence (Isa. xi. 2,) he is called so in the original (RUACH JEHOVAH) Spirit Jehovah.

And we have a beautiful illustration of this in the

New testament by way of explaining the Old. It is recorded in the book of Exodus, that when Moses was "speaking with the people he put a vail on his face. But when he went in before the Lord, to speak with Him, he took the vail off," (Exod. xxxiv. 33, 34.) Now that no possible mistake might arise to form a right construction to this passage, in proof that the Lord before whom Moses went in uncovered was the Spirit, the apostle Paul (taught by the Holy Ghost) told the Church this great truth in so many words: "Now the Lord (said he) is that Spirit," (2 Cor. iii. 13, to the end.) A more decided testimony cannot be required.

From the *anointing* of Christ to his ministry, we may traverse the history of our adorable Lord through the whole of his work; and we shall find, in every act, the *presence* and *abiding* of God the Holy Ghost upon him. John, acting as Christ's harbinger, had said, that while *his* baptism was confined to water, Christ's should be known in his "baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," (Matt. iii. 11.) And Jesus himself referred his miracles to "the Spirit of God," (Matt. xii. 28.) And very certain it is, that as the prophet had foretold, the Spirit Jehovah would "rest upon him," so from the moment he "was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil," to the close of his ministry, he was full of the Holy Ghost; when he returned, it is said, "that he returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," (Luke iv. 14.)

I pass over, for the sake of shortness, entering into the particulars of Christ's ministry. What hath been brought forward is enough in proof of the anointing and consecrating Christ by the Holy Ghost; and as such, there can need no further testimony on this ground to his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry.

But the *death of Christ*, in the offering of himself a sacrifice for sin, being so important a part, and in which the personal ministry of the Holy Ghost is referred to

with such an emphasis of character, it must not, in a work of this kind, be wholly passed by.

The Lord Jesus Christ is expressly said to have offered himself an offering without spot to God, "through the eternal Spirit," (Heb. ix. 14, 15.) It is well worthy the reader's observation, that each glorious person in the GODHEAD, hath special notice taken of him in this high transaction. It is said, as hath been noticed, that this great sacrifice was offered "through the eternal Spirit." And of the sacrifice itself so immensely valuable was it, that we are told by that *one offering* which Christ offered voluntarily of himself, "he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Heb. x. 9—14.) And that the part God the Father took in it might not be overlooked and forgotten, it is as expressly said to be by "the will of God." By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," (Heb. x. 9, 10.) What a blessed concurrence of the holy Three Persons of the GODHEAD is here to this blessed offering!

And when from the *death* of Christ, we pass on to the triumphs of his *resurrection*, evidences to the same amount meet us at his tomb. In allusion to God the Father we are told that "the God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," (Heb. xiii. 20.) And of Christ, Peter bore testimony that it was by his own efficient power he arose, for "it was not possible that he should be holden of the pains of death," (Acts ii. 24.) Paul also left it upon record, that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," (Rom. i. 4.) Like Samson, (who in this instance, was his type) he arose, and took the gates of hell and the grave with him, in testimony of his triumph over both; and carried them with him to the top of the hill, (Judges xvi. 3.) And in proof of the

Holy Ghost's agency in this glorious deed, Christ is expressly said to have been "justified in the Spirit," (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Nay, this blessed truth, in relation to the Holy Ghost, is carried further; for it is said, that the resurrection of Christ's mystical members shall be effected at the last day by the same cause, even by the indwelling Spirit, as the almighty Head was. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," (Rom. viii. 11.)

Go one step further, and behold the Son of God in our nature at his *ascension;* and here is the same display of the accompanying power in the glorious act itself, by all the persons of the GODHEAD. God the Father is said to have set him "at his own right hand in heavenly places." And the Son of God is no less said, "when he had by himself purged our sins, to have sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And God the Holy Ghost is said at his ascension to have "made him both Lord and Christ," (Acts ii. 36.) Hence God the Holy Ghost commanded the "everlasting doors" to open when Jesus returned as King of glory; and he it was who anointed him to his sufferings on earth, anointed him also to his triumphs in heaven, (Eph. i. 20; Heb. i. 3; Psalm xxiv. 7—10.)

And what is it now? Doth not God the Holy Ghost still "rest upon him?" (Isa. xi. 2.) Is not the Spirit as much with Jesus now in heaven, as he was when Jesus was upon earth? Is there a tongue so profane, or one so blasphemous, as to say, that the Spirit is departed from him? Speak, ye precious souls! who have received, and are daily receiving, the ascension gifts of Christ in the descension blessings of the Holy Ghost; from whom, and by whom, are your minds comforted, nourished, and built up, day by day, but from Christ's mission of the Holy Ghost? Who but God the Spirit comforts you upon earth; the same which crowned Christ in heaven?

And are not all the sweet promises of Christ thus daily, hourly fulfilled, which told you of his expediency to go away, that he might send the Spirit? and, being come, he "forms Christ in your heart the hope of glory." Say then, are these not full, clear, palpable, undeniable testimonies to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost?

And now, before we enter upon another Lecture, let the Church of God ponder well the vast subject which hath been proposed to their meditation in this, and as far as the sublime nature of a doctrine so necessarily deep and mysterious as the personal unction of Christ the Son of God in our nature must be; let every faithful follower of the Lord Jesus pause, and contemplate the infinite importance of design in the mind, will, and pleasure of Jehovah, which in the consecration of Christ to his mediatorial acts, called forth the united agency of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

One view of this subject is striking, and I would beg to bring it before the church of Christ. If it became necessary, that he who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," should be anointed with the Holy Ghost; how unanswerable the argument which ariseth therefrom, that all his people should be under the unction of the same Spirit. If the Head needed the consecration of the Holy Ghost, can the members be without it?

Chiefly I would say to you that are ministers of my God, (if any of that description are present at the delivery of these Lectures, or may hereafter read what is here offered,) what a world of apparatus introduced Christ into his ministry! And what less can be the necessary introduction of all his faithful servants? Was it needful for Jesus of Nazareth (as Peter called him, Acts x. 38,) to be anointed with the Holy Ghost? And can any thing less than an unction from the same Spirit qualify for the ministry? Can any man be truly sent whom God the Spirit hath not sent? If "none taketh this

honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron;" can any be called, whom God hath not called; or any enter the Lord's service but by the Lord's authority? Nay, is it not said, that "even Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec," (Heb. v. 4, 5, 6.) And if there are any who, uncalled, unsent, unauthorized of God the Holy Ghost, rush into the ministry as the unthinking horse to the battle, is it not to be feared these scriptures are awfully fulfilled? "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied!" (Jerem. xxiii. 21.)

Ye children of God! who adore the sovereignty of Jehovah in the unction of the Lord Jesus; look to it above all things that ye have of the same Spirit "an unction from the holy One, that ye may know all things," (1 John ii. 20.)

While it is blessedly said of the glorious Head, that "the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;" it is also said, that "to every one of us (namely his members) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And although there be a "diversity of gifts and differences of administration; yet all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (John iii. 34; Eph. iv. 7; 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.)

May He that anointed our almighty *Aaron* with the holy ointment, poured on his head, cause the sacred unction to flow down to the skirts of his garments, even to his members, "which like the dew of Hermon," and as "the dew which descended upon the mountains of Zion," may give grace to his people; for "there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore," (Palm cxxxiii.)

LECTURE IV.

If I were called upon to state in a comprehensive manner, what according to my views of scripture constitutes the blessedness of the Lord's people upon earth, after the work of grace is begun in their souls, I could not hesitate to say, that it must be wholly made up in the personal knowledge of, and communion with, the glorious Trinity of the persons in the Godhead; for as the Church of God is chosen to be everlastingly holy, and everlastingly happy, in uninterrupted communion with God in glory when this life is ended, the anticipation of it now by faith must form the purest source to all present joy.

But this communion with God in the Trinity of his Persons cannot be enjoyed without a clear apprehension of him. We must know under divine teaching, God in the Trinity of his Persons; and we must know also from the same source, the special and personal acts of grace by which each glorious person in the Godhead hath condescended to make himself known unto his people, before that we can be said personally to enjoy communion with each, and with all. Few even of the Lord's people study this sweet subject under these distinctions; and yet if studied wholly in scripture, and under the Lord's teaching, nothing is more simple, plain, and perspicuous to every child of God. Allow me to dwell a moment upon the subject.

There is a glory in Jehovah, which may be called his *essential glory*, arising from his very nature and being, which is perfectly incommunicable to, and altogether

incomprehensible by, any *mere* creature. This is that glory in which he dwells, in Unity of the Divine Essence and Trinity of his Persons, in which the holy Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, possess alike and in common, all divine perfections; and in the mutual enjoyment of each other, have existed from all eternity, and to all eternity, in one unceasing and never to be ended state of holiness, blessedness, and glory. Now with this *essential* glory no mere creature ever hath, or ever can have, communion. Angels or men are alike precluded all approach, for so saith the scripture. "He is the King eternal, immortal, invisible: who only hath immortality:" that is, *per se* in himself. "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see," (1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 16.) The very nature of those perfections, here described, imply as much. His invisibility, his incomprehensibility, would cease if discoverable. Hence John saith, "no man (the word is *oùdeis, no one*, that is, not man only, but all mere creatures, whether *angels or men*,) hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," (John i. 18.) It is the Son of God only, who came forth from the bosom of the Father, and assuming our nature into union with the GODHEAD, which made God in any manner visible. And the angels never saw any thing of God, more than the glories of his works, until they saw him manifested in Christ. Without this manifestation God, as God, was, and is to them, as to us, invisible; for so saith the scriptures. "God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels," (1 Tim. iii. 16.) If angels could have seen God, they also might have declared him. But this alone was, and is the province of God's dear Son in our nature. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily," or personally, (Col. ii. 9.) Pause over this view, for it is scriptural. And from hence we learn, that as this *essential* glory which

distinguisheth God in his Trinity of Persons is in its very nature perfectly incommunicable to, and altogether incomprehensible by, any mere creature; it is not here that we have communion with the persons of the GODHEAD; it forms the foundation of our faith; it becomes the glorious security of all our hopes. We learn from it, in opposition to all the infidels of the earth, "that there are Three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One," (1 John v. 7;) but communion with God in this glory we have none. So much in relation to the *essential glory* of Jehovah.

But there is a glory of Jehovah in which we have communion, and for the participation in which God was pleased to go forth in the formation of his Church in Christ; and which as it forms our whole blessedness in enjoyment now, so will it be our everlasting portion to all eternity, namely, his *manifestative glory*. This glory, which through God's love our spiritual faculties are made capable of apprehending, is the "manifestation of God's grace in the person of his dear Son," in whom we are brought nigh to God, and called forth to the knowledge of, and personal communion with, the whole persons of the GODHEAD. God the Father hath made known his everlasting love to his Church in these acts of grace, which specially define his person, and endear him to all his children. God the Son hath no less displayed his everlasting love by those personal acts of his grace, in betrothing the Church to himself before the world, and redeeming her in time when fallen in the Adam transgression. And God the Holy Ghost by his sovereign acts of grace to every individual of Christ's mystical body, from everlasting hath made known his personal love, when in the fulness of time he regenerates their nature, and quickens them together with Christ.

And what makes this knowledge of, and communion with, the glorious persons in the GODHEAD so truly

blessed is, that as it is all *personal* from each glorious person in the GODHEAD to the highly favoured objects of God's everlasting love; so is it *personally* given to every individual of Christ's mystical body. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Hence therefore every tendency of grace, every love-token of favour from the holy Three, comes with so much blessedness, and is so truly personal, that the child of God finds an everlasting source of "joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Our poor short-sighted inattentive minds lose much of this blessedness while here below, from being more occupied with objects of sight than those of faith. But that the Lord in his Trinity of Persons is unceasingly engaged in watching and watering his people, that one sweet scripture of Jesus's love-song to his Church is a full proof: "Sing ye to her a vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." The daily visits of his love, we should think precious; but Jesus's love outruns all this. His waterings are *every moment*. What sources of blessedness arise then from personal communion!

That men untaught of God, and consequently unrenewed in the spirit of their minds, should call these truths in question, is not a subject of wonder. The scripture teacheth us to expect it, and explains the cause. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Here the whole is shewn; and at the same time, as if to draw a line of everlasting distinction between carnal and spiritual men, the same scripture immediately adds: "But he that is spiritual judgeth (or as the margin renders it, *discerneth*) all things, yet he himself is judged (discerned) of no man," (1 Cor ii. 14, 15.)

But in speaking of the blessedness of communion with God in the Trinity of his Persons, it is not enough to say that it constitutes the chief happiness of life to the Lord's people, but it should be added moreover, that without it we lose one of the blessed covenant promises of God, and which was to distinguish the Church of God in the latter-day dispensation: "My people (saith the Lord) shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I!" (Isa. lii. 6.) "They shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them," (Jer. xxxi.; Heb. viii.)

Hence, therefore, where there is not this personal knowledge of God, and communion with God in his Trinity of Persons, this covenant promise is not enjoyed. The word of God is not fulfilled; the child of God is not living up to the privileges of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And consequently there must be great leanness of soul and spiritual poverty where this is the case, whatever fulness of ordinances may be kept up, and however apparently much outward prosperity of profession may be in the churches.

It is worthy our closest observation, the vast tenderness the Lord Jesus manifested on this subject of personal communion in his last conference with his disciples. He was then on the eve of departure to his Father; and had in view the prospect of being received by the whole Church above in his *Abrahams*, and *Isaacs*, and *Jacobs*, gone before to glory. Nevertheless he told his disciples (and in them all his redeemed to the end of time,) that he should leave his heart behind him. He assured them of his constant presence and favour, and that he would be everlastingly manifesting himself to them otherwise than to the world. Yea, within the compass of a few verses of each other in one chapter, he promised the visits, yea, and the abidings of himself, his Father, and the Holy Ghost, to be with them for ever.

Hear his own words, for they are sweet. In relation to the Holy Ghost he thus spake, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

And in relation to himself, Jesus added: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

And in reference to the Father, Jesus thus spake: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, (John xiv. 16—23.)

Were there ever any expressions of equal tenderness with those of the Son of God? What an opening doth it give us to look into his very heart! And what form of words can be more plain, more palpable and decisive? And can there be any promises in the bible to which we are authorized to look more for confirmation? Nay, is there a child of God present, or can there be a child of God upon the face of the whole earth, in whose heart a saving work of regeneration hath been wrought by the Holy Ghost; but knows by heartfelt experience the certainty of these promises, and is living upon them? Are there not many of you present ready to come forward, and with cheerfulness, while blessing the Lord for his unspeakable gift, to "set to your seal that God is true?" (John iii. 33.)

Surely I am not singular! But if I am, let me be singular. In such an awful day of rebuke and blas-

phemy as the present, I dare not be silent. As one desirous to be found faithful to God and to the souls of his people, I profess before you all, that these sweet promises of the Lord Jesus have been, and for many years past, "my songs in this house of my pilgrimage." My soul hath feasted upon them times without number. I have felt their blessed accomplishment continually. And now in the present moment, not a day in my life more or less ever passeth without going over them afresh, and calling them to remembrance. I find it blessed to bring them before the Lord. I find it blessed to tell the Lord of his promises. He hath said, and I know the profit of it, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them," (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) And when I feel, as that I do feel, the personal manifestations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it fills my soul "with a joy unspeakable and full of glory." Well is it for me that the Lord first sought me, or I never should have sought him. And when a tide from this ocean of love breaks in upon my soul, I feel constrained to cry out with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33.)

And wherefore should this be thought incredible? Are we not taught in scripture, that Jehovah, when going forth in acts of creation to make manifest the riches of his grace, chose the Church in Christ for the express purpose of bringing into union with himself the Church which he had chosen. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," (Isaiah xliii. 21.) Observe the expression, formed for *myself;* not simply

for my property, as "the earth and the heavens are the Lord's, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills;" but for myself, for my own personal enjoyment. Consecrated and made holy for me, my portion, my inheritance. "The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," (Deut. xxxii. 9.)

And it is blessed to see how each glorious person in the GODHEAD has manifested special personal acts, whereby each is known and loved, and adored. For example, of God the Father it is said, that he *chose* the Church in Christ before the foundation of the world; *predestinated* the Church in Christ, to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, and *accepted* them in the beloved.

Now these are all *personal* acts of God the Father, which define his person, and manifest his love. And they are all *personally* made also, and given to the very persons whom he hath chosen. For of him "the whole family in heaven and earth is named," (Eph. iii. 15.) Hence, when to the individual child of God, the Lord doth thus make manifest his love, and doth in effect say, as he did to Moses, "Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name," (Exod. xxxiii. 17;) what a blessed door for the sweetest communion is at once opened, with our God and Father in these *personal* acts of *his* grace!

Similar views are found in the personal acts of God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Indeed the whole is personal; Christ's union with his Church is personal; his love to her is personal; all his grace is personal. He hath married our persons, died for our sins, washed us in his blood, made us kings and priests to God and the Father; and from everlasting all the manifestations he hath made, is making, and will make to all eternity; all is personal from *him*, and personal to them who are the objects of his favour, and as such, open an endless

source of unspeakable blessedness both in time and to all eternity.

And of God the Holy Ghost, his love is of equal date, and of equal greatness with that of the Father and the Son; and all alike personal, both from himself and to the identical members of Christ's body. And it was and is a very sweet testimony of the persons in the GODHEAD, that what God the Father in his personal acts *predestinated*, God the Son by assuming our nature *redeemed;* and God the Holy Ghost when regenerating our nature, gives life to *receive* the adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba, Father! The Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 16.)

I have made a long introduction to my Lecture, but I hope when what hath been said be considered, it will be found not departing from the original design in view, but rather a collateral support to the same. And I must beg yet further to trespass on your patience, before I open the subject proposed in this Lecture, *of the unction of the Holy Ghost on the Church at large*, simply to ask a question from what hath been said.

Let it be supposed, for the sake of argument, that this or any other Church of God, professing the eternal truths of God, were living in the full enjoyment of those high privileges. When I say the Church of God, let me not be mistaken. By the Church of God, I do not mean places of worship; no, nor the congregation of worshippers, made up of a promiscuous body of people; but by the Church of God, I mean what scripture calls the Church,—Christ's mystical body, formed only of truly regenerated persons. I say then, let it be supposed, that such a Church, either in this place or any other, was living in constant communion from personal knowledge of, and "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." I ask what heresy could

arise, or cunning craftiness of men creep in, to unsettle such a blessed society; or for a moment tempt them to call in question the reality of their spiritual enjoyments? Could any child of God be brought to doubt the person of the Father, Son, or Spirit, who lived in constant holy acquaintance and divine familiarity with each and with all? Could it be possible for him to give way to the insinuation of carnal men, or the temptation of the enemy, that God the Holy Ghost is no person, and exercises no ministry; who felt his soul day by day led out, refreshed, comforted, and sustained by his indwelling presence and consolations; and his heart "directed by him into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ?"

And what would be the *retired hours* of every member of such a church, from the daily, hourly enjoyment, of personal communion with all the persons of the GODHEAD? And what the blessed effects of *public ordinances* in the Church at large, when all animated by the same Spirit found the savour of Christ's name in every one of them as the ointment poured forth; and "the teeth of the Church like a flock of sheep shorn, coming up from the washing, where every one beareth twins, and none is barren among them, (Song iv. 2.)

But bear with me, I beseech you, if I add, supposing such a church to degenerate into a cold, lukewarm, Laodicean state, content with the mere ordinance, while regardless of the presence of the God of ordinances; their wine mingled with water, and like Ephraim of old, "strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs were here and there upon him, and he knew it not," (Hosea vii. 9.) To speak without a figure. When a church of God, professing all the eternal truths of God, and yet those glorious truths are thrown into the back ground in our preaching; such I mean as the everlasting love of God to his Church, in his electing, distinguishing love, and unchanging grace

to his people; the finished salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ; the essential work of God the Spirit in regeneration; his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry; justification wholly in, and by Christ, and the final perseverance of the saints: when these and the like holy doctrines are hid away from the people, or what is tantamount to the same thing, not insisted upon as the sole life of the soul, and flimsy discourses of the supposed improvements and attainments of man supply the place; which serve only to bolster up Pharisees, and compliment human pride at the expense of God's truth; where such things take place, it is no wonder heresies find footing in such churches. "While men sleep, the enemy sows tares;" and God our God is a jealous God, jealous of his honour, jealous of his glory, and if he withdraws his presence, the mere profession of the best form of worship will profit nothing. It matters not how scriptural soever the ordinance itself hath been framed, if JEHOVAH SHAMMAH be not there. "The glory is departed," and Ichabod may be written on the walls of that house, (1 Sam. iv. 21.) Even Shiloh became an hissing, when the Lord for the negligence of the people suspended the light of his divine countenance, (Jer. vii. 12.)

It hath been said that great schisms have lately been made in many churches. But if such things as I have just glanced at be the *causes*, until these are removed it cannot be expected that the *effect* will cease. Great God the Spirit! thou almighty Minister in the Church of the Lord Jesus! Take, Lord, all thy Churches into thy sovereign hand. And now the enemy is come in like a flood, do thou according to that sweet promise, lift up a standard against him," (Isaiah lix. 19.)

I now hasten to the proposed subject of my present Lecture. The *former* brought before you some of the outlines of the Spirit's work in his unction of the person of Christ, the glorious head of his Church and

people. I am now in this Lecture, to bring before you, testimonies from scripture, to the same amount, *of the Holy Ghost's unction of Christ's members.*

In the opening of the subject let it be well remembered, and never lost sight of through the whole Lecture, that all the persons in the GODHEAD bear equal love to the Church of Jesus. Hence, therefore, amidst the several acts of grace personally manifested by each, the whole is the result of the joint purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure of the GODHEAD. So that the unction of Christ and his Church, which is the more immediate work of God the Spirit, is nevertheless from the united grace of the whole Trinity of Persons in Jehovah.

There is a peculiar blessedness in this work of God the Holy Ghost in his unction of the Church; that he who anointed the head, should also anoint the members. For as was before shewn in the preceding Lecture, the Son of God could not have been Christ, until made so by the unction of the Spirit; so neither could the Church have been the Church of Christ; that is, "Christ's anointed ones," without the unction of the Holy Ghost. Hence we find the prophet so expressing himself: "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed;" or, as it might read, and indeed is read by the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint, "thy Christ's; thine anointed ones," (Habak. iii. 13.) Let it be always remembered, however, the difference in the degrees of that unction between Christ and his people. The Spirit was not given "by measure unto him." In him the Holy Ghost was, and is, as a fountain, (John iii. 34.) But "unto us (his members) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." In us as mere vessels, (Ephes. iv. 7.)

For the better apprehension of our subject, I shall adopt a similar plan to the one I observed in the preceding Lecture; namely, *first*, endeavour to trace the footsteps of the Holy Ghost in his divine ministry through

the Old testament. And then, *secondly*, look unto those more open manifestations of his unction of the Church under the New; before which it is said the "Holy Ghost was not given;" that is, not so fully made known, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified," (John vii. 39.) I shall have a *third* branch of duty on this subject to perform, (and a very interesting one indeed it will be,) namely, when I have shewn the *general* ministry of God the Holy Ghost on the Church at large, to set forth according to scripture, some of the *special* manifestations of the Spirit's anointing, in every individual member of Christ's mystical body.

And before I enter upon the arduous work proposed, I would look up to that almighty God of whom I speak, (and may the Church present look up with me,) that both speaker and hearer may be brought this day under his divine unction; that while I speak by the outward ministry of his word, the Lord himself may speak to all his people present by the inward illumination of his grace; that in the renewings of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, he may give testimony this day to his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry. Amen.

If we begin our subject at the opening of the bible, with the very first relation we meet with of divine worship after the fall, we immediately discover traces of the Spirit's work. We are told, that the offering of Abel came up with acceptance. "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering." But that the Church might not be ignorant of the cause, the Holy Ghost himself in after ages explained it. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous; God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh," (Heb. xi. 4.)

Now if we consider the case of this man, and form our conclusions upon the general analogy of scripture,

here was the hand of God the Holy Ghost most strikingly displayed. For who taught Abel that he was a sinner, so as by faith in Christ, to offer up his sacrifice for acceptance in him as the promised seed? It is the work of the Holy Ghost to convince of sin; and it is no less his office to glorify the Lord Jesus, by convincing the sinner of his all-sufficient righteousness. If therefore Abel had the knowledge of *both*, who taught it him but God the Holy Ghost? And as it is said that he obtained "witness that he was righteous," here is another express work of God the Holy Ghost, for Jesus so described him: "He shall testify of me," (John xv. 26.) And if Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, having by faith in Christ offered his offering as a sinner, God testified of his gifts by giving conviction to the mind of Abel that he was accepted in Christ.

Pass on to Enoch, the seventh from Adam, of whom it is said "he prophesied," Jude 14. But where and from whom got this man the spirit of prophecy? The Holy Ghost himself answers the question by Peter: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Peter i. 21.)

And if Noah was a "preacher of righteousness," as the scriptures describe him, (2 Peter ii. 5,) from whom he had his ordination before the flood; but the same God the Spirit, whose special work it is to ordain all that are ordained, true preachers of Christ and his righteousness. That the Spirit was with Noah in his ministry is shewn in so many words; for when God was about to destroy the old world, he suspended Noah's preaching, and said, "my Spirit shall not always strive with man," (Gen. vi. 3.)

And when we add to this account of Noah's preaching, what the Holy Ghost himself hath taught by Peter, in reference to this age of the Church, I venture to conclude that we have as complete a proof in those instances

of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost *before* the flood, as we have *after*, in any period of the Church to the present hour.

Speaking of Christ, thus the apostle expresseth himself: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by the which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water," (1 Peter iii. 18—20.

I must not indulge the propensity of entering very far into a view of this scripture, but only glance at so much of it as tends to prove the ministry of the Holy Ghost in this period of the Church.

Here, therefore, we learn that Christ preached by his Spirit, before his incarnation in the days of Noah, by the ministry of this man. And the Holy Ghost explains it yet further, when telling us, that all Noah's ministry was *by faith:* his preparing the ark to the salvation of his house was all *by faith.* This was Noah's preaching, building the ark. His views of Christ were such as enabled him to condemn the world who believed not; and he became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith," (Heb. xi. 7.) What can be more in point of the Holy Ghost's ministry? Surely it is as decisive of his divine agency in those remote periods of the Church as now, when in the preaching of the gospel, "the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven," (1 Pet. i. 12.)

"If from the *antideluvian* age we pass on through the succeeding generations of the Church, to watch for the footsteps of the Holy Ghost's ministry among the patriarchs and their descendants, the faithful, large traces of his saving grace may be discovered upon their hearts. In that one department alone of his ministry, by *vision*, several pages might be filled with the history.

The ministry by *vision*, forms no inconsiderable part

in both testaments of the Holy Ghost's watchfulness over his Church. And this is a special and personal act of grace in God the Spirit. Isaiah called his whole book of prophecy a *vision*, (Isaiah i. 1.) And no doubt, the Author of prophecy and of vision is one and the same.

That the patriarchs and faithful in every age were under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, and were actuated by his indwelling residence, the lives of these holy men of old all bear testimony. The example of one serves to throw so strong a light upon every other, in whose heart the Spirit of the Lord dwelt, that I would beg to bring it before you. It may not be exactly regular, while prosecuting the history of the Church, in order to advert to an age so much further on as that of David; but it is so much in point, and so completely illustrates what we read of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with their descendants among the faithful, that I feel much disposed to insert it in this place.

Christ declares, that when David was speaking (as that he doth speak) in Psalm cx. of God the Father appointing his Son to sit on his right hand until he had made his enemies his footstool, David was in the Spirit, and by that Spirit called Jesus Lord. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," (Psalm cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 42, &c.) There is not, in my recollection, but one similar passage in all the bible, namely, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; and that not so much in point: for this is as strong as ten thousand in proof of the holy Three Persons in the GODHEAD. We are authorized, and by Christ himself, to say, that it was by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, David called Christ Lord. "David in Spirit called him Lord." And hence therefore, we have a proof that he was taught of the holy Three in One by the Holy Ghost. Jehovah the Father said to Adonai, the Son, sit thou on my right hand. When David said this, he was in

the Spirit. Hence it follows, that in all ages of the Church, it is from the same almighty agency, God's faithful ones have had the same views, and called Jesus Lord. And so that before the coming of Christ, as well as now, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. xii. 3.)

But to return. It is at the time the Church of God was in the wilderness, after the deliverance of the Lord's people from Egypt, that we must look for the more striking testimonies of God the Spirit's ministry in the Old testament scripture. Here we have a full and complete view of the whole, to establish the doctrine of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

The prophet Isaiah, who lived about eight hundred years after Israel came out of Egypt, taught the Church that it was God the Spirit which brought them out from thence; that led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm; though they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit, so that he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them. Yet, nevertheless, he remembered the days of old; and "the Spirit Jehovah caused him to rest," Isaiah lxiii. 7—14.

But the whole body of ordinances, types, shadows, and offerings instituted during the Church's abode in the wilderness, were all by the immediate appointment and direction of God the Holy Ghost. And the reason is evident, as none but God the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son, had any knowledge of the events, sufferings, and death, which were to distinguish Christ; so none but God the Holy Ghost could glorify Christ, by representing under Jewish ordinances and figures the shadows of which Christ was the substance under the gospel dispensation.

I have in the preceding Lecture referred for my authority to all this, in relation to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, to what is said in the Hebrews, where, as I then shewed, the whole is confirmed to the fullest de-

monstration. For after describing very minutely the several services and furniture of the tabernacle, we thus read: "the Holy Ghost this signifying," (Heb. ix. 8.) Which as I then shewed, and now repeat, (for it cannot be repeated too often in an age of infidelity like the present,) this at once proves the Person, the GODHEAD, and the Ministry of the Holy Ghost. His Person. For who but a person can be said to do personal acts of appointing and commanding certain services? His GODHEAD. For who but God could appoint *divine* ordinances? And his Ministry. For what can more fully shew his superintendence than both instituting those ordinances, and declaring what he signified by them.

From the wilderness if we pass on to Canaan, and behold the Church there under the government of judges and kings; whatever change took place in the depression or exaltation of Israel, still we find the Holy Ghost in his ministry, and carrying on his gracious designs by the services of his prophets. For whether while the Church seemed at the summit of prosperity and the first temple stood; or whether when the Church was carried into Babylon, and ordinances for a time seemed to cease, God the Holy Ghost left himself not without witness. Ezekiel and Daniel ministered under his unction to the Lord's people while in captivity; and when the Church was brought back, and the Lord stirred up the people to build the *second* temple, we read how the Lord was all along affected to his people. "Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest: and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts; according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." (Haggai ii. 4, 5.)

The ministry of the Holy Ghost was eminently striking in relation to the *five signs* of glory which were

in the first temple, and which were not in the second. And the appointment of them in the *former*, while purposely withholding them from the *latter*, is in my esteem among some of the strongest testimonies to his person and ministry; while evidently intended ultimately to the glorifying of Christ Jesus.

No doubt it must have been infinitely sublime and glorious, the *five signs* of the first temple. *First*, the *urim* and the *thummim*, by which the high priest received communications concerning God's commands. *Secondly*, the ark of the covenant; from whence issued answers to the sanctuary services, by a clear and distinct voice. *Thirdly*, the fire upon the altar, which came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. *Fourthly*, the unction of the high priest to his office in testimony of God's presence. And, *lastly*, the spirit of prophecy, which evidently marked those whom the Holy Ghost called.

But though the *second* temple had none of these signs, the Holy Ghost was hereby preparing the Church for the coming of Him to whom these things, glorious as they were in themselves, were by shadows. The Holy Ghost put it into the mouth of Haggai to comfort the people with the assurance, that the glory of the *latter* house should be greater than the *former*. For, said the Lord of hosts, "the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts," (Haggai ii. 7—9.)

And what a glorious accomplishment of his promise was it, when the Son of God in substance of our flesh entered the temple! He was, and is, and ever will be, the true *urim* and the *thummim*, by whom hath been declared to his Church the whole purpose, council, will, and pleasure of God. *Secondly*, Jesus is the real ark of the covenant, of which all others were but types; yea, he is the covenant itself of God to his people; the fulfiller of it, the messenger of it, the

all in all of it to his Church; even the Lord our righteousness. *Thirdly*, he is not simply the fire of the altar only, but both the propitiatory and the propitiation; his blood cleanseth from all sin; his baptisms are with the Holy Ghost, and with fire thoroughly to purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; "but to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," (Matt. iii. 11, 12.) And *fourthly*, his presence with his people is not barely manifested by outward signs and tokens, but he hath tabernacled in our flesh; yea, is "Emmanuel, God with us." And we are "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." And *lastly*, he is not to us as a spirit of prophecy only, for the Spirit was not given "by measure unto him," (John iii. 34:) but of his fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace, (John i. 16.)

I have nearly ran through the Old testament, in bringing before you the proofs of the Spirit's ministry. And though from the very nature of the mysterious subject itself, as might be well supposed, our researches go but a very little way; yet I please myself with the hope, that enough hath been shewn from the Old testament scriptures, even from the first dawn of revelation to the close of the prophets, to carry conviction to every regenerated heart, of the certainty of God the Holy Ghost anointing the Church of Christ, as he hath Christ himself; and that his unction became essential to both Christ and his members. And thus we see the ministry of God the Holy Ghost regularly carried on like a golden chain, link by link, from the beginning to the end of the Old testament, and with the close of Malachi, the last of the prophets; though a suspension of all prophecy took place for more than three hundred years, yet as the going down of the sun in the western heavens only indicates the more glorious arising in the east on the succeeding morn, so with the decline of Old testament prophecy, the Church was taught to look forward to the

New testament accomplishment, when the Sun of righteousness would arise with healing in his wings; and that day would dawn upon the earth which should no more go down, when "the Lord himself would be our everlasting light, and our God our glory," (Isa. lx. 19.)

I come now, as was proposed, by the division of my subject, to the *second* particular, namely, to look into the New testament for those more open manifestations of the unction of the Holy Ghost upon the Church, in the continuation of his ministry, and proofs of his eternal power and GODHEAD.

I shall not think it necessary to dwell upon these testimonies of his divine agency, manifested at the ushering in of Christ in substance of our flesh. No doubt I might dwell long and not unprofitably on those very sweet instances which took place on that occasion; I mean his operation on the mind of Zacharias, John the Baptist, Elizabeth, and good old Simeon; to whom it was revealed "by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ," (Luke ii. 25—38; John i. 32—34; Luke i. 41.) But I must wave all these, with every other particular which might be gathered from the gospels, in order to call your attention to that more open manifestation of the Holy Ghost's personal ministry which opened at the feast of Pentecost immediately after the Lord Jesus Christ returned to glory.

It is worthy your closest observation, that as each person of the GODHEAD took equal parts in the grace and love manifested to the Church; so each glorious person would make some more open and special revelation to the Church, as if to define yet more strikingly his eternal power and GODHEAD.

Thus as God the Father had at several times during our Lord's ministry upon earth manifested himself by a voice from heaven; and God the Son had openly tabernacled in substance of our flesh, and dwelt among us; so

God the Holy Ghost was pleased to make an open visible manifestation of himself, when on the day of Pentecost he came down under the similitude of a sound "of a rushing mighty wind," and in the form of "cloven tongues like as of fire, he sat upon the heads of the disciples," (Acts ii. 1—4.)

The prophet, ages before, had marked somewhat of those features in prophetic language, in declaring, that when the Lord should have "washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof;" that is, when Christ had by one offering of himself once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified, it would be "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," (Isaiah iv. 4.)

There was a peculiar beauty also in the order of the divine economy respecting this dispensation. The coming of the Holy Ghost was the great promise of the New testament, as the coming of Christ had been the great promise of the Old. And this visible manifestation to take upon him his ministry, was not only intended to shew that now in a more open manner the Lord the Spirit entered upon his ministry in the Church, but also that now it should be known by the whole body of Christ, in all his mystical members, he would inhabit and make them his temple. And this became a most decided proof of the everlasting love of the Holy Ghost to the Church, in common with the Father and the Son. For as the human nature of Christ was equally the joint work of Father, Son, and Spirit, it was but meet that the same joint agency should be exercised towards the members of this glorious head. And thus it is plain the Holy Ghost loved the Church from everlasting, as he had loved Christ; and his unction of both head and members was the fullest testimony to the same in every age of the Church. Beside this open display, let me here observe, that of God the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, there were *four* other manifestations of his

divine presence, though not attended with equal marks of splendor. The *first* is related to us, Acts iv. 31; the *second*, Acts ix. 17; the *third*, Acts x. 44; and the *fourth*, Acts xiii. 52.

In following the footsteps of the Holy Ghost from this period, through the various departments of his ministry in the Church, we find the same marks of his divine superintendence and government (only in a more open manner) as was observed under the Old testament dispensation. The institution of ordinances, the ordination of ministers, and the direction given to them for the exercise of their ministry; these were by his disposal, and they are all in point to the highest confirmation of his Person, Ministry, and GODHEAD.

The apostle Paul had been (as is well known) called by sovereign grace to the knowledge of the Lord, by the Lord Jesus Christ himself from heaven; yet this superseded not the necessity of his being consecrated to the office of the ministry by the Holy Ghost. We have the interesting account thus related: "Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; and as they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them."

Such was their ordination! To this succeeded the place in the appointment of their ministry. "So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia," (Acts xiii. 1—4.)

At another time, we read how the Holy Ghost prevented them from going to preach at one place, and sent them to another. "When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedon, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he

had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel there," (Acts xvi. 6—10.)

And when Paul was at Corinth, and had met with much opposition in preaching the gospel; "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee;" adding, by way of strengthening the apostle to the work, "for I have much people in this city," (Acts xviii. 9, 10.)

Thus we see how unceasingly God the Holy Ghost watched over the Church, consecrated ministers, appointed them their stations, and gave his unction to them and to his people. And to him, and his efficient ministry, the Church of God owes all the blessed consequences which result from the ministry of the word, in every instance of success, and in every age of the Church. Yea, it is but little considered, but what ought to be had in everlasting remembrance, there is not a word of scripture, but was written by his inspiration, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) The very precious records we have of the conversation between the Trinity of Persons in the GODHEAD, but for the Holy Ghost causing them to be written, never could have been known. I mean those passages in scripture, where we read: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," (Gen. i. 26.) "The man is become as one of us," (Gen. iii. 22.) "Let us go down," &c. (Gen. xi. 7.) "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us," (Isaiah vi. 8.) Surely here is Jehovah himself, speaking to himself, in his Trinity of Persons: and nothing can be a higher proof of the Trinity of the Persons in the GODHEAD. For there is not an instance to be found in the Hebrew tongue, where the word *us* or *we* (which are both plural) is ever used for any *single* person. And they not only prove to us

this plurality of persons in the GODHEAD, but they blessedly shew at the same time, the everlasting love of each glorious person in the GODHEAD to the Church in Christ.

Such views of God the Holy Ghost may not be common, but they are correct and most precious. And I cannot help remarking, that it may very justly be ascribed to this one cause, wherefore in the present day so little unction is enjoyed in our churches, and felt by individual members of Christ's mystical body: but because the blessed Spirit is not honoured with the same glory, and praise, and love, as are the persons of the Father and of the Son; where this is the case, certain it is that the Holy Ghost is not known; and hence we are not waiting as we ought daily and hourly at the mercy seat, for the manifestations of each glorious person, in the distinct acts of love and grace, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I would charge it upon my own forgetful heart, as I earnestly desire it may be impressed on yours, that not only the whole body of scripture was written under the Holy Ghost's inspiration, but the very special promises of Christ; the very tender manner of expression in those promises of Christ; yea the whole history of the life, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, and triumphs of Christ; were all written since Christ returned to heaven, and all under the direction of God the Holy Ghost. Are these, or are they not, testimonies in proof of the love of the Spirit, and of his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry?

I will detain you but with one observation more on this *second* branch of our subject, relating to the ministry of the Holy Ghost; namely, that though it is but little considered among men, yet it should seem a matter clearly definable, that beside the *special* unction of the Holy Ghost, which he bestows upon the Lord's people,

he is also in his *ordinary* gifts the great source and teacher of all arts and sciences, and of all the learning and improvement among men in the world.

The conviction of this is grounded upon many parts of scripture where the Holy Ghost is not only called the Spirit of *wisdom*, and *understanding*, and *counsel*, and *might*, and the like; but also where he is spoken of as inspiring men with knowledge, and judgment, and discretion. Thus we are told that Bezaleel and Aholiab were employed in curious workmanship for the temple, and "every wise-hearted man in whom the Lord wrought," (Exod. xxxvi. 1; Isa. xxviii. 24.)

But the most decided proof to this point, is that which is given in respect to languages; by comparing the event of the confusion of tongues at Babel, with the miracle wrought by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, when the Lord gave ability to the apostles to speak to the different nations assembled at that feast, in *fifteen* different languages: we are strongly prompted to believe that it is from the divine agency of the Holy Ghost proceeds all the information given to men, in the ordinary gifts of science, and of knowledge, in all the departments of life.

But let the child of God not fail to gather an improvement from hence. All sciences, philosophy, gifts, and attainments, in *natural* things, rise no higher than *nature*, and with the death of the body cease for ever. But *spiritual* gifts remain to all eternity. The Holy Ghost, in his *ordinary* gifts, qualifies the statesman to manage empires, and the mathematician to solve problems. But here their wisdom ends, and dies with them; but the child of God is taught a divine science, which maketh wise unto salvation, and which brings him into a knowledge that is at once *spiritual* and *eternal*. He hath "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Let the child of God make a right estimate of this distinguishing grace and favour!

And let him moreover learn thus to estimate the love of God, not by largeness of gifts, not by human attainments; no, nor even by any thing progressive in himself; but by the love of God, which is the source and fountain of all. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." This runs up all our blessings to the fountain-head of blessings, and renders every blessing a blessing indeed.

I proceed now to the *third* point proposed in this Lecture, namely, the unction of God the Holy Ghost, *personally*, on every individual member of Christ's mystical body. This is indeed, as the result of the whole, the most interesting part of any, and what every child of God should continually study, from the first dawn of grace in the new birth, until grace be finished in glory. I must be very brief however, and shall only glance at the several acts of grace in God the Holy Ghost, which manifest his Person, Godhead, and Ministry.

It is blessed to trace our own personal history in the united love of the holy Three Persons in the GODHEAD, as manifested toward us. We can know nothing of these blessed acts until, by regeneration, God the Spirit hath quickened us to the new and spiritual life. Before this vast work is wrought in us (the greatest ever wrought in time or eternity), we are as unconscious of the everlasting love, either of the Father or the Son, as the heir of a kingdom the moment of his birth, to his royal inheritance. But when the Holy Ghost hath called us from darkness to light, we then behold the grace of each glorious person manifested personally towards us, and trace the love of all.

And what endears those acts of grace in each person of the GODHEAD towards us is, that once done they are done for ever. When God the Father named the members of Christ's mystical body (Eph. iii. 15) their names once written "in the book of life," were written for ever, (Luke x. 20.) When God the Son had made his soul an offering for sin, by "this offering

of himself, once offered, he perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Heb. x. 14.) And when God the Holy Ghost hath regenerated the child of God, he can die no more in spirit. He is "thereby made a partaker of the divine nature," (2 Pet. i. 3, 4.) These distinct acts define the persons in the GODHEAD, and their equality in point of importance prove the equal, everlasting love of Jehovah in his trinity of persons to all the Church in Christ.

But let us attend to some of the personal acts of God the Holy Ghost, in his unction of every individual member of Christ's mystical body; for that is the point of our present subject in proof of his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry. I say, *some* of the personal acts of the Holy Ghost; for a thousandth part in the life of every individual who is made partaker of his unspeakable gift, would far exceed the ability of any one to describe.

To begin with the first of them, in the great act of *regeneration*, before which no child of God hath any knowledge of the love of God, or of the person and salvation of Jesus Christ. When God the Holy Ghost, who at the creation of nature commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath in the new creation of grace shined in our hearts; it gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This sovereign act is that which makes the vast change from "darkness to light;" and from the power of sin and Satan "we are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," (Col. i. 13.) And all sins are pardoned, for so the Holy Ghost witnesseth. "You being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses," &c. (Col. ii. 13, 14.) And all grace is insured. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness," (2 Pet. i. 3.) Such is the almightiness of this divine act; and such the immense blessings included in the

one gracious work of God the Holy Ghost in *regeneration.*

I said before, it is the greatest work, the greatest change made upon the child of God, either in time or eternity; for if the Lord, after the work of regeneration hath been wrought, was instantly to take the renewed soul to glory, the change would not be equal; yea, all the advances in glory, through all eternity, would not be so great in point of change as this first act of the new birth. For in eternity it is only going on from glory to glory, but this act of grace is calling the child of God from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; from nothing to every thing; from the power of Satan to the living God. Until this is wrought, there is no capability of knowing God, or loving God; for the carnal mind is enmity with God. Pause! and contemplate the almightiness of the act, and then say whether it doth not fully prove his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, by whom it is wrought.

I detain you to observe at the same time, that this new birth is not the *cause* of our salvation, but the *effect* of it. Christ did not die to make the redeemed, children of God; for that they were before. Neither doth the Holy Ghost regenerate any to make them children; for we are told, that it is "because they are sons," God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cry "Abba, Father," (Gal. iv. 6.) But regeneration brings the children into the knowledge and enjoyment of their sonship, and proves here again, as in every other instance, the equal everlasting love of the whole persons of the GODHEAD.

Let me further remark: this blessed act of *regeneration* is endeared to us yet more, because it is the sole work, and sole gift of God; no merit, no desert of ours, no preparation on our part in the least disposing to it. The child of grace, as well as the child of nature, is wholly passive in the new birth. The children of God,

as well as the children of the world by nature, are all alike dead in trespasses and sins. Sovereign grace alone makes the change by regeneration.

And yet more, to shew the greatness of this act in God the Spirit, the new birth in all God's children is alike one and the same; there is no difference in this instance between the new birth of the apostles and the humblest of the Lord's people. They are all equally regenerated, equally born again, equally partakers in the new birth. And as children in nature, when born perfect in all their limbs and faculties, may be said in this sense to be equally born; so children in grace differ nothing in the new birth. True indeed, in the after-stages of life, God the Spirit is pleased to give to his new-born children spiritual gifts, some greater, some less; "dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. xii. 11.) Yet in respect to the new birth, there is a perfect equality. They are alike by that act made partakers of the divine nature. Little saints as well as great saints are equally the members of Christ's body; and if the least of them was found wanting "when the hundred and forty and four thousand," with the innumerable multitude, which no man can number, shall stand encircling the Lamb on Mount Zion; how would the song of salvation be sung? (Rev. vii. 4, &c.)

Still further it is proper to remark, that regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of grace, which passeth only on our spiritual nature, and makes no alteration on the body; our Lord's own account of it is sufficient in proof: "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit," (John iii. 6.) The new birth is of the Holy Ghost; consequently not of the flesh. No part of the body is renewed; for if it were it could be no longer subject to death. It is the spirit only that is new born; for Christ expressly saith as much: that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And hence this is holy, being made partakers of the

divine nature, for "all things are given to it which pertain to life and godliness," (2 Pet. i. 3, 4.) Hence therefore they who talk of progressive holiness, talk without the authority of scripture, and contrary to their own experiences. For where is this progressive holiness to take place? Not in their *bodies;* for they have never been renewed; neither will till Jesus shall raise them at the last day, when it is said he will change our *vile* bodies; vile bodies they could not be if they were progressively made holy. And it cannot be in their *spirits*, for they are made partakers of the divine nature in the new birth; and it would be little short of blasphemy to talk of progressive holiness in spirits united to Christ, and made partakers of the divine nature.

I have dwelt long upon this one sovereign act of the Holy Ghost in the *new birth;* but I must observe further, the blessed Spirit doth not leave his ministry when he hath wrought this act, but takes his new-born babes under his divine charge, in feeding, nourishing, educating, and leading on through all the departments of grace, until he hath brought them home to glory. If you would wish to follow the footsteps of the Holy Ghost in those gracious acts of his, you will find an ample account given by Christ himself, in the xivth, xvth, and xvith chapters of John's Gospel. Indeed the bible is full of the same. God the Spirit hath furnished such rich and blessed promises, that from the moment of the new birth, his gracious design is that the whole Church shall suck and be satisfied with the breasts of consolation, and milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of glory. Yea, he blessedly saith, and so it is, when grace is in lively exercise, the child of God is "borne upon the sides, and dandled upon the knees," (Isa. lxvi. 7—13.)

In short, for it would be endless to enumerate the several acts of grace manifested by God the Spirit to all the members of Christ's mystical body; let it for

the present suffice to say, that from the first moment of regeneration to the hour of undressing the body for the grave, the Holy Ghost never ceaseth his watchfulness and his care over the whole of the Lord's people. As the *Spirit of truth*, to guide into all truth; the *Comforter*, to soothe all his exercises; a *Spirit of grace and supplication*, to guide in prayer; a *Spirit of promise*, to confirm all the promises; a *Spirit of holiness*, whereby alone we mortify the deeds of the body; and himself both the *seal* and the *sealer*, or *earnest*, of the promised inheritance:—in all these, and ten thousand times ten thousand acts, doth God the Holy Ghost manifest his love to his people, and thereby prove his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry to the whole Church of God.

One act, and that a very blessed act, little understood, but of immense consequence to be known and kept in remembrance by the Church, must not be passed over in a work of this nature; namely, this great, this gracious, this almighty Spirit doth not only conduct his people from the moment of their new birth to the hour of dropping into their grave, but he goeth with them there, yea and dwelleth with them there, and becomes the efficient cause of raising their bodies at the last day. To explain how this is done, is not our province. To believe it, is. The Son of God's promise confirms it: "He shall abide with you for ever," (John xiv. 16.) This would not be the case if the Holy Ghost was separated from us at death. For the body of Christ was not by death separated from the GODHEAD, but still united by an hypostatical union; so the Holy Ghost is not separated from his people at the dissolution of their bodies, but they are still his temple, and he dwelleth in them. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," (Ps. cxvi. 15.) And hence that scripture confirms it: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bo-

dies by his Spirit, which dwelleth in you," (Rom. viii. 11.) What a precious thought for every regenerated child of God to lie down with, night by night, until he comes to lay down in the dust in the night of death. The Holy Ghost seems here to speak to his regenerated, as the Lord did to Jacob concerning his going down into Egypt. "Fear not, go down into Egypt: I will go with thee! And I will surely bring thee up again," (Gen. xlv. 3, 4.)

I will only for the present add a short observation from the whole.

We have seen with what a world of tenderness God the Holy Ghost hath watched over the Church in all ages! We have beheld him shedding his unction on the person of the glorious Head, and all the members of Christ's mystical body. We have moreover been led from the scriptures of eternal truth to discover, that this almighty Lord ceaseth not his watchfulness over the Church of God even when they go down to the grave; but as the Lord Jesus promised concerning him, so the blessing is fulfilled, "He abideth with his people for ever," (John xiv. 16.)

Let the whole church of God therefore pause over the view of those gracious acts, and then say, what unanswerable testimonies all these must bring in proof of his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, of whom such things are said. And let the Church consider what equal love, reverence, and godly fear must be his due, in common with the Father and the Son, as the united source of all the blessedness of the Church in time and to all eternity!

LECTURE V.

EVERY man by nature is disposed to revolt at mystery; for such is the pride of the human heart, induced by the fall, that without an act of grace wrought on the mind by the Lord himself, we are told (and by an authority not to be questioned) that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

That there are mysteries in our most holy faith, and such as from their very nature must remain to us mysteries for ever, is certain. But this is so far from being an objection to the cordial reception of the gospel, that it is the strongest recommendation, as it is the highest glory of it. The being and essence of Jehovah, existing in a trinity of persons, and yet no less distinguished in the unity of the GODHEAD; the personal relationship of the Father to the Son, in the essence of the divine nature; the union of the GODHEAD with manhood, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the order in the covenant of grace in the three Persons all equal, but the one *sending* and the other being *sent;* and the Holy Ghost acting in his own sovereign agency, and at the same time proceeding from the Father and the Son: these are mysteries, the very contemplation of which must for ever dazzle the highest intellectual sight of any *mere* creature. To apprehend them in their full glory, much less explain them, is impossible. But it should be remembered that they are not proposed for

our explaining, but for the exercise of our faith. Supposing the possibility of what is impossible, but supposing the nature and mode of existence of God, was brought down to the apprehension of his creatures, his incomprehensibility would cease, and consequently he himself would also cease to be God. What is in its nature infinite, cannot come within the grasp of what is finite to apprehend. By *effects* therefore only can we form suitable and becoming thoughts of this first, almighty, and eternal *cause*, in relation to the *essential* glory of his nature and being.

But while the essence and glory of Jehovah is, and must from its very nature be, for ever veiled in mystery to all creatures, merely as creatures, there is a glory that may be called his *manifestative* glory, which in infinite condescension God hath been pleased to make known of himself, in his trinity of persons; and by special acts of grace from each to the Church in Christ, we are brought acquainted with the personal love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in such a way and manner as tends to open an everlasting source of adoration, love, and praise, to the one glorious and undivided Jehovah, in and through the person and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not, however, that this gracious revelation, Jehovah hath been pleased to make of himself, is free from mystery. It could not indeed be supposed, that in the present unripe state of our faculties, and in a fallen nature as we now are, that the divine purposes concerning his church could be so far unfolded to our view, as to enter at once into the clear apprehension of them. We are at present incapable of searching far into a subject so wonderful as that of redemption. Many are our exercises on the mysteries of faith. Many events arise therefrom, which daily call forth "the patience of the saints." But on these, and every other point relating to mysteries, which our abilities when ripened in glory shall be

able to apprehend, we are assured that they will be all then unfolded. When we get out of this twilight of existence, and are brought into the open day of perfect being, the *manifestative glory* of Jehovah will be fully laid open, and "we shall know, even as we are known," (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

In the mean time it should be observed, that from the fallen state of man here below, things mysterious with which our darkened understandings are frequently exercised are not confined to religion. Many are the occurrences with which this world's wisdom is often tried; and there are events among them, which become at times more difficult to unriddle than the hardest proposition of Euclid. It is not (as well as I recollect) much more than an hundred years since, that the first discovery was made of the circulation of the human blood. And though when it was discovered, nothing could be more simple and obvious to the common apprehension of every anatomist, (insomuch that every one of them wondered that it had never been known before,) yet what numberless errors did the whole faculty fall into, while the subject remained unknown?

And what a mystery for ages together, was the doctrine of Eclipses! How panic-struck were multitudes upon their appearance; not a few concluding, when they beheld them, that the end of the world was come! But when it was discovered by astronomers that eclipses were nothing more than the intervention of planets, and that the shadow of the earth passing between the sun and moon, occasioned these phenomena in nature, the mystery was at once over; all fears about the world's end upon those occasions died away, and men of science, who make it their employment to study the motions of the heavenly bodies, can now calculate to a moment their regular return for years to come.

And in subjects of an higher nature, what blessed revelations have been made respecting mysteries, in the

kingdom of grace, with which our forefathers were exercised; but which from age to age the Lord hath graciously been unfolding to us, their children. It is not presumptuous on this point, while ascribing all we know to divine teaching, to say, that in many things we are better informed than all the generations of the Church before us. For as the Lord hath been fulfilling the prophecies of scripture which they delivered in their day and generation, but which required the predicted time to confirm by their acomplishment; those throw a light over these parts of the whole word of God, and especially such as referred to the latter ages, and through grace give us an advantage which our fathers did not possess.

What a beautiful illustration we have of this in the instance of the apostle Paul. The Holy Ghost was pleased to impart to this man a secret of the most blessed nature, and which, by the Lord's command, he communicated to the Church. There was not a patriarch nor prophet of God; no, nor either of the apostles of Christ, to whom the Lord made known this mystery, but Paul. And the Church of God, as soon as Paul had made it known to them, understood it as well as he. The secret I allude to is what the apostle related to the church of Corinth, when speaking of the resurrection. "Behold! (said he) I shew you a mystery! We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.)

What a mystery was here unfolded! And what a source of inexpressible joy was at once opened to the Church of God in the discovery! Confident as the faithful in Christ Jesus were, in every age, of their safety in Christ, when falling asleep in Jesus at death; yet before this mystery was opened, they knew not the blessedness of the Lord's intention concerning them; how he would

distinguish them at the resurrection from the ungodly dead. Neither could they have had the least idea of a change so wonderful, as Paul here related would take place, on those saints of God which were alive upon the earth at the Lord's coming; not to pass through the grave, but be at once changed from their corruptible bodies into incorruptible. What a gracious discovery was at once made! And what a subject of unspeakable comfort hath ever since poured from it in upon the soul, to give strength and consolation to the faithful, in looking forward to the end of life, and to call forth praises to the Lord.

And if the Lord hath been thus explaining mysteries to his church and people, from age to age, which when explained, are so obvious as to shew that the things themselves are not attended with the smallest difficulty in the accomplishment; but it is our present blindness only, which now renders them so difficult of apprehension; what a world of discovery will then at once be unfolded, when we enter upon our new being, to demonstrate the Lord's wisdom, and grace, and love, in all his ways and works below!

The mystery of *election*, which now excites so much bitterness in the breast of the carnal, while it calls forth the unceasing wonder, and love, and praise, of all the redeemed, will then cease to be a mystery, and surprise no more! When the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one, shall be found arranged under their respective heads; and Christ is beheld encircled with *his* family, and the devil with *his;* the whole congregated word will at once, and intuitively discover, that the election of grace included the whole of Christ's kingdom, and the rejection of the *rest* (as they are called Rom. xi. 7,) referred only to the kingdom of Satan, (Matt. xii. 6.) And here the mystery ends.

This great truth indeed was preached to the church, and by the Lord himself, immediately on the fall. For

when the Lord God pronounced sentence on the old serpent the devil, (so called, Rev. xii. 9,) these were his words: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed, and her seed," (Gen. iii. 15.) Mark the expression: *thy* seed; that is, the seed of the *serpent;* and *her seed*, that is, of the *woman;* most decidedly shewing that the serpent hath a seed, as well as the woman. And these are not *angels;* for there is no propagation of *angels* by seed; neither in scripture are they ever so described. But the seed of the serpent are *men*, as are the seed of the woman, or of Christ, which is meant by the seed of the woman. And hence we find the different seeds uniformly marked through the whole bible.

The apostle John declares Cain to have been "of that wicked one," meaning the devil. John doth not say that he was *tempted* of that wicked one to slay his brother; but he was *of him*, that is, *his seed*, (1 John iii. 10—12.) And the Lord Jesus thus marked the whole race. He called them "serpents, a generation of vipers, which could not escape the damnation of hell," (Matt. xxiii. 33.) And in the parable of the *good seed* and the *tares*, Jesus in so many words declared, that "the good seed were the children of the kingdom;" and "the tares, the children of the wicked one; the enemy which sowed them is the devil," (Matt. xiii. 24—40.) And if possible, in yet stronger terms, when speaking to certain among the Jews, Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," (John viii. 44.) Observe in all those descriptions, the Lord doth not say that they were led away by the temptations of the devil, and acting as his *servants* and *vassals*, but that they were his *children;* and with whom therefore what they did was as natural, having the same nature, as it was with their father to do so.

On the other hand, the Holy Ghost hath marked the features of the children of Christ, and shewn the

sure promises God hath given concerning them. They are said to be a *people* whom God hath formed for himself, who shall shew forth his praise, (Isaiah xliii. 21.) A *remnant* in the midst of many people, (Micah v. 8.) "A chosen generation," (1 Peter ii. 9.) And concerning whom the Lord the Father hath said to Christ: "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," (Isaiah xliv. 3.) "As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth; nor out of the mouth of thy seed; nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever, (Isaiah lix. 21.) What can more decidedly shew the features of character of the seed which mark each? And what can determine the doctrine more strongly in proof of the both kingdoms?

I have often thought, that had we the faculty of discerning spirits, (as Paul had, when filled with the Holy Ghost, he declared Elymas, the sorcerer, to be "a child of the devil," (Acts xiii. 10,) it would not only solve a thousand problems, which now often perplex the Lord's people, but it would for ever put a stop to the presumptuous reasonings of weak and foolish men, who would fain have more mercy than the Lord, and therefore are very angry with him respecting election.

Let me not, however, be mistaken. I speak not as though I thought it were desirable to possess such a faculty in the present life. Far, very far from it. Sure I am, it would be productive of many evils; and therefore it is in great mercy withheld from us. But I merely say, that if we could discern spirits, it would so damp the pride of the human heart, that none would be found any longer to arraign God's wisdom, and God's justice, in his exercise of election. For who would then find fault with God, in withholding grace from the seed of the serpent? Every child of God would then see the

impossibility of giving it. And in instances where, until that discernment was made, a man might lean in wishes towards another; yet when seen, he would no longer cherish such in his bosom, but do as Moses did, when he saw his rod turned into a serpent, "flee from before it," (Exod. iv. 3.)

But let it be remembered, that though we do not possess such a faculty in the present life, and cannot therefore often distinguish "the precious from the vile," yet our ignorance of the different seeds makes no difference in the seed themselves. Christ's kingdom, and Satan's kingdom, Christ's seed, and the serpent's seed, are in the world, and as distinct from each other as light and darkness; and as impossible to coalesce and become one, as the *clay* and the *iron* which the monarch saw in his vision, (Dan. ii. 43.) The great day of the Lord will explain all. And then the sovereignty and justice of God will be unfolded, the world shall see that God's *election* hath included the whole of Christ and his seed; and the *reprobation* extended but to Satan and his seed. Not one of the little ones of Christ's kingdom will be found shut out. Not one of the brood of the serpent taken in. Each kingdom will be marshalled under their respective heads, and the whole plan of the divine government being laid open to view, will call forth unceasing praise to God, and everlasting joy to his church in Christ Jesus.

But conceive what paleness, what horror, what anguish of soul will overwhelm those men at the discovery, who in this life, merely from their own presumptuous reasonings, and in direct opposition to the holy scripture, have impeached the divine justice in *election;* and dared to say, and write such things of God, as I tremble but to read, and consider too blasphemous even to copy off on paper! Is it not with an eye to such, the apostle speaks, when in his description of the last day, he saith, "Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his

saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their *hard speeches*, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him!" (Jude 13.) And while such men must be struck dumb in everlasting silence, "the song of Moses and the Lamb" will burst forth in unceasing acclamations of praise from the whole election of grace, to the God of their salvation. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" (Rev. xv. 3.)

In the prosecution of the sacred subject proposed from these Lectures, I come now to a part which I enter upon with peculiar pleasure, and which I hope the Lord will give grace both to enter upon and accompany all the way, that the close may be for the Lord's glory, and our happiness; namely, of the testimony of Christ and his servants, to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

I have often been struck with the very gracious manner our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to adopt, when, in order that the apostles might give their testimony to Christ's person and doctrine, Jesus put the question to them, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Why, some thought one thing, and some another, among the people, similar to what would now be the case if the question was again proposed, even to what is called the Christian world; but, said Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am?" And Peter, as the mouth of the rest, for himself and fellow disciples, cried out with an ardour of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And this procured for him the gracious answer from Jesus: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," (Matt. xvi. 13, &c.)

I say, that I have been often struck with the grace manifested by the Lord Jesus on this occasion: but it

never once entered my mind, at any of those seasons, that a time would come, when with all humbleness of soul, I should follow the Lord's example, in proposing a similar question to the Lord Jesus himself, in relation to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, after such palpable and clear testimonies as the Son of God hath given on this subject, who would think it necessary to say to Jesus, Whom doth Jesus say the Holy Ghost is?

I should blush at the presumption, did the question really remain doubtful. I should blush yet more, if I myself, so late in the day of life as I am now advanced, needed the inquiry. I bless the Holy Three in One, that I have long known, and as long enjoyed from divine teaching, the personal knowledge of, and communion with, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and from the grace manifested from each, and from all, I can truly with the apostle say, "I know whom I have believed." But it is not for my own conviction, but others, that I am humbly proposing the question. For when, as in the present awful day of rebuke and blasphemy, those fundamental truths of our holy faith are denied, it should seem that nothing can be more decisive to silence such daring infidelity, than the testimony of the Son of God; for the Lord hath said so much concerning the Holy Ghost, in description of his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, as it is only needful to gather into one point of view, for the most perfect conviction on this head, of every child of God, who is taught of God. For it may be said of his testimony to the Holy Ghost, as is said of the testimony of the Father, to Christ himself: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son," (1 John v. 9.)

And here, at the very entrance on our subject, we need go no further to gain the most absolute conviction of Christ's testimony to the Person, GODHEAD, and

Ministry of the Holy Ghost, than what he hath said of him, in his farewell sermon to his disciples, the night before his sufferings and death.

The Son of God being now on the eve of his departure, and the Holy Ghost shortly after about to succeed Christ in his personal ministry, the Lord was pleased to enter very largely into the account of the Person, and GODHEAD, and Ministry of him that should come after him. The limits of a Lecture will not admit that I should go over the whole of the relation given by our Lord on this subject; neither indeed is it necessary, as the evangelist hath so fully and blessedly recorded the discourse itself of Jesus. A few only of the more prominent features will I gather from it in proof.

Jesus opened his discourse concerning the Holy Ghost, in these gracious words: "I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," (John xiv. 16, 17.) Now pause, and *first* consider in this short but sweet account, the Son of God here gives of the Holy Ghost, the decided testimony it affords of the trinity of persons in the GODHEAD. Here is Christ himself as Mediator, praying to the Father for the mission of the Holy Ghost to his people. Here is the Father personally prayed to for that gift. And here is the Holy Ghost distinctly spoken of as the Spirit of truth, and as another Comforter; thereby denoting both his Person and his GODHEAD. For who but Jehovah is it that comforts his people? "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker?" (Isaiah li. 12.)

Secondly, In those blessed words of the Lord Jesus, concerning the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the

Holy Ghost, observe how sweetly he talks of him. "He shall abide with you (that is, with the Lord's people) for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," (John xiv. 16, 17:) intimating that they knew him now by the work of regeneration, which he had already wrought in their hearts, and by his dwelling in them, and being in them. All which testified to his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry. For as these were all *personal* acts, and *personally* wrought in them, in distinction to the world, so they were all the acts of the GODHEAD; for abiding with them, and dwelling in them, proved his everlasting presence, and the sovereignty both of his grace and power, and actions, which could be ascribed to none but God.

If we go further into this gracious discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall find very many testimonies of a like nature, arising every where around to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. I think I counted more than twenty times, where Jesus speaks of the Holy Ghost as a person distinct from himself and the Father; not only by *acts* but by *name*. He calls him *He* and *Him*; which are well known to be personal pronouns, and such as cannot without violence both to grammar and common sense be applied to any other but a *person*. And this is the more to be regarded, because had not the Lord Jesus known him to be a *person*, and that he meant thereby to teach his apostles to receive him as such, and to teach the Church also, the words should have been differently rendered. I beg this may be noticed with that due attention it merits, coming as it doth from the Son of God, who is himself the "way, and the truth, and the life;" and who in speaking of the Holy Ghost, whose very advent was "to lead them into all truth," would not have suffered his apostles, at the very threshold of the subject, relating to the Lord the Spirit, to fall into error.

And I hope that I shall not reasonably offend, if I add, that (though this argument cannot be supposed to have so much weight with an ordinary reader, who is unacquainted with the original Greek, and therefore cannot as clearly see the ground on which it rests,) a personal pronoun will not admit of any translation but what is personal; yet I trust those who know the original language, will both see it and acknowledge it, and be influenced, through grace, thereby. I say this more especially with an eye to that description of characters, whether ministers or hearers of the word of God, who deny the Person and GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost; and are earnest to teach others also. And I truly beg of all such to observe our Lord's own words in confirmation of what I say.

In the 16th chapter, 13th verse, of John's gospel, we have the blessed promise of Christ, concerning the Spirit's teaching thus expressed: "He the Spirit," &c. Now every one acquainted with the original knows that the words translated, "He the Spirit," are *ekeinos* to *pneuma*. Now *ekeinos* is of the masculine gender, and *pneuma* the neuter; a thing not admissible in grammar, and impossible to be explained, but upon the presumption that Christ purposely so expressed it to manifest the person of the Holy Ghost; and that his apostles, and the Church through them in every age, should know him and reverence him as such.

And while I am upon this subject, (though it be for the moment departing from the immediate testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Person of God the Holy Ghost,) yet speaking as to the original language, I would refer to another passage of the like nature to the one just noticed, used by the apostle Paul, whose knowledge will not be questioned, when it be recollected that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. The passage I refer to, is Ephes. i. 14, where the original words are *os estin:* which our translators have rendered *which is;* but as *os*

is the masculine gender, it is notorious that it should have been *who*. And it is still stronger in point, because the word *pneuma*, which is understood, and with which *os* is to agree, is of the neuter gender, which renders it a very decisive testimony to the same proof. The inspired writer speaking of a person, and that person the Holy Ghost, he purposely put the *os* in the masculine gender; and therefore he is the earnest of the promised inheritance, of consequence a person.

In addition to these testimonies, concerning the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, I would next request that it may be noticed in this discourse of the Lord Jesus, those various *active* and *passive* qualities which he ascribes to him; and to whom there could be no such application, but under the fullest conviction of personality. The many offices of *comforter*, *teacher*, *witness*, *remembrancer*, *glorifier of the Lord Jesus*, *Spirit of Truth*, and the like, are in proof. But it were leading to a subject far too extensive to come within the limits of this work, to enter into the particulars of every one. A few of the more general will be sufficient for explanation.

Thus the Lord Jesus, speaking of the Holy Ghost's ministry, saith, "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. He shall not speak of himself.—He shall shew you things to come.—He shall glorify me.—He shall bring all things to your remembrance," &c. Now attend to one or two striking particularities under each of these, and observe how fully they shew the Lord Jesus's testimony to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

Receiving from one, and *shewing* to another, are personal acts, and define person. For there must be a distinction between the *receiver*, and him by whom the things are *received*. *Speaking* also, and yet not of *himself*, is a very strong proof of being and identity; and the more so, as it is here said by our Lord, that he that

speaks is distinct from *him* of whom he *speaks;* neither speaks he of himself.

So in like manner, when the Lord adds, "He shall shew you things to come; he shall glorify me; he shall bring all things to your remembrance," &c.; let the common sense of mankind say, who less than God can shew things to come? Jehovah himself made this the standard of decision with Israel, for them to judge of false gods. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods," &c. (Isaiah xli. 21—23.) And the Lord Jesus himself made this *one* among the many proofs of his own GODHEAD, when in this same discourse he said to his apostles, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe," (John xiv. 29.) Nothing could more decidedly prove the GODHEAD of Christ than this foreknowledge; and therefore the same holds equally good in confirmation of the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost: "He shall shew you things to come."

And who but God, as God, can glorify the Lord Jesus? Who is it but the Spirit of truth, which guides into all truth? by holding up Christ in all the glories of his person; in all the fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency of his finished salvation; declaring him to be what God the Father hath set him forth; a propitiation for sin, through faith in his blood, a complete remedy for fallen sinful creatures. And when he hath revealed him, who but God the Holy Ghost can persuade a poor sinner into the cordial acceptation *of* him, and to live *upon* him, to live *to* him, and to rejoice *in* him as the Lord our righteousness?

And who but God the Holy Ghost is competent to that blessed work of *remembrancer*, in bringing to our poor forgetful minds the person, love, and grace of Jesus; his promises and assurances; and enabling us to plead them before him? Was it not by the exercise of this grace that he enabled the evangelists and apostles, years after the Lord Jesus returned to glory, to recollect the works, and words, and miracles of Christ, and commit them to writing for the Church? And who is it now that causeth the Lord's people to consider the things of Jesus, and to have our souls at times made burn within us, while talking to us by the way, and opening to us his scriptures? Doth not every regenerated child of God know the Holy Ghost in this blessed act of *remembrancer;* "to direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ?" And can any but God do these things? Are not these proofs to his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry?

And is it possible in the face of such things to deny his Person and his GODHEAD, and count him only as an *emanation*, a *quality*, an *energy*, or *influence* from God? What is an *emanation?* Doth it act of itself? for if not a person, it hath no substance. And if it only operates when acted upon by another, whensoever that agency ceaseth, or is suspended, it becomes a nonentity, and is no more. Can this be said of the Holy Ghost, concerning whom, when the Son of God promised his mission, he said, "and he shall abide with you for ever?"

Moreover, if the Holy Ghost be nothing more than an *emanation*, how could the Lord Jesus call him *another* Comforter? The very term *another* implies a somewhat similar to what was before. But what comforter could an *emanation* be, to supply the place of Jesus? Could the apostles have been satisfied with the change? Yea, would the Lord Jesus have so dealt with them, as to amuse them with an hope to end only in disappointment?

He had said to them, that it was expedient for them that he should go away, for if he did not, the Comforter would not come. And had the Lord Jesus considered the Holy Ghost but as an *emanation*, and not a person, would he have thus argued the expediency of his departure? Yea, in that case, what necessity for Christ's departure, for the coming of an *emanation* from the Father? Are the Father's emanations restrained, when the Lord's people have the more immediate enjoyment of the Lord's presence? Is it indeed necessary that one should go for the other to come? In short, so many and inexplicable are the difficulties which arise to the view, in relinquishing the glorious truth of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; that it is only astonishing the heresy which robs him of these glories, should have gained a single proselyte, when the thing itself is attended with such absurdities and contradictions.

But to shew yet further into what delusions men may run, when once making departure from the straight line of truth: some of those very persons who have come forward to deny the Person of the Holy Ghost, and to reduce him to the rank of a mere *emanation only*, have advanced another point, and asserted, that *the Holy Ghost is not a party in the covenant of grace.* Indeed, when men go so far as to deny his Person and his GODHEAD, what is there of sacred truths that can be a sufficient fence to the boldness of infidelity? It is really awful the times in which we live! And what the end will be, the Lord only knoweth!

It should seem as if God the Holy Ghost himself, against this daring heresy, had set his decided mark; and in that memorable scripture of the prophet's vision, had there shewn for the comfort of the Lord's faithful ones, and the confusion of their enemies, a full proof of his being a party, and that a most efficient one, in the covenant of grace. I may be singular, but it appears to me, I confess, as if this vision was granted to the pro-

phet, and explained by the apostle for this express purpose. I beg the reader to look at it attentively.

The prophet relates, that in a vision he saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." Now, that this was Christ, we have full authority to say, for the evangelist in after ages so explained it, in reference to him. "These things, said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," (John xii. 41.)

The prophet adds, that among other things he heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Here then there is an evident conference among the persons of the GODHEAD. For that more than one was present, is plain from the words *I* and *us*. It is not said who was this speaker. But if we might presume from the analogy of scripture to form an opinion, it is probable to have been God the Father; for in the covenant of grace it is his personal act to *send*.

But that God the Holy Ghost was present, and intimately concerned in this transaction, is as fully proved, as that it was Christ's personal glory the prophet saw. For the apostle Paul, when referring to this scene in so many words, declared that it was God the Holy Ghost. "Well spake (saith Paul) the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet," (Acts xxviii. 25.)

Now let the reader pause over this view of the subject. Here is an evident conversation between the persons of the GODHEAD; and that conversation about the covenant of grace. Whatever conference took place before, most clearly this was one, and the Holy Ghost was present; yea, the chief speaker. How then can any man in the face of this scripture dare to say, that *the Holy Ghost is not a party in the covenant of grace*. I pray the reader to ponder it well; and then let him say whether such a record (and a plainer one is not in the whole bible) was not intended by the Holy Ghost

himself, to confront the daring heresy *now;* and to put into everlasting silence the abettors of it *then*, when the Lord shall come "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe?"

While I am upon this subject, respecting the Holy Ghost being denied by some to be a party in the covenant of grace, I would observe from those words of the Lord Jesus what appears to me to be another proof that he was a party in that covenant, and that the Lord Jesus so spake of him on that very account. "He shall not speak of himself (saith Jesus); but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak," (John xvi. 13.) These words have indeed been noticed before, but not in the sense in which I would now beg to consider them.

The Holy Ghost doth not speak of *himself*, because his special act is to speak of, and to glorify the Lord Jesus. In like manner Christ saith, that he "did not seek his own glory." For the truth is, that the whole persons in the GODHEAD have but one and the same will, purpose, and pleasure, to seek in all the acts of grace shewn the church. Hence when Christ said to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work: therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said that God was his Father; making himself equal with God," (John v. 17, 18.)

Now that the Holy Ghost in not speaking of himself, but of the person and acts of Christ, and of the glory of the holy Three in One, in the ministration of Christ; this is, in my esteem, no small proof that the Holy Spirit is a party in the covenant of grace.

And yet further, when our Lord saith that "whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and he shall shew things to come:" several very weighty considerations arise from hence in confirmation of the Holy Ghost being a part, and that a very active one in the covenant of grace. For first, it proves his *person*. He

is said to *hear*, and to *speak* of what he hears, and to *shew* of things to come. All these are *personal* acts. And *where* is the Holy Ghost supposed to hear, but in the council of peace, between the persons of the GODHEAD? And what is he supposed to hear but of the covenant of grace, when coming from the Father and the Son; to teach the Church all things, and to bring all things to the remembrance of the Lord's people, of whatsoever Christ had taught them? And what can give a more decided testimony to the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, than in his *shewing things to come?*

As the last paragraph hath been directed to the answering objections, before that I return to the further consideration of our Lord's testimony to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, it may not be amiss in this place to answer another.

Many have been the objections of men who are of a sceptical turn, and would be wise above what is written, at the supposed inequality in the acts of the divine persons, as they relate to the covenant of grace. And some have contended that there is an inferiority in the *persons* to each other, from what they conceive to be an inferiority in the acts. The Father (say they) is never said to be *sent;* but he sends the Son and the Spirit.

In answer, it may be said, that unless we had been present at the council of peace, when the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; and the Son gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour; and God the Holy Ghost undertook, from his everlasting love to the great Head of his church and people, to anoint *both* with the unction of his grace; we are incompetent to any judgment upon the subject. Before that creatures such as we are can decide upon points so mysterious, we must first know what is and what is not superior and inferior in things relating to the GODHEAD.

We have fully made known unto us in the scriptures,

the perfect equality that there is in all that constitutes GODHEAD in the holy trinity of persons. Hence this fundamental truth being once clearly revealed, and acted upon by faith, every thing relating to *acts* and *works*, the *sending* or being *sent*, must remain to us a secret. The whole is mysterious; and Jehovah in all revelations declares that what is made known, he is pleased to call "the mystery of his will," (Ephes. i. 9.) Hence when we read, as in this discourse of Christ, that he would *send* the Holy Ghost; and when we compare this scripture to the one he delivered ages before, under the spirit of prophecy, that the Lord God and his Spirit had *sent* him, (Isa. xlviii. 16,) we conclude, that there is no contradiction in those scriptures, but rather they serve to illustrate and explain one another. Each glorious person in the covenant of grace hath taken that work, for the manifestation of his personal love, and grace, and favour, as infinite wisdom in council was pleased to appoint. And yet all is the joint result of one and the same Jehovah, whose essence and being is but one; but who in that essence and being exists in a trinity of persons.

Similar objections have been made to the terms *second* and *third* persons in the GODHEAD; the word *trinity*, *eternal generation*, and the like, in that they are not scriptural: and it must be confessed they are not. But it is understood, or at least ought to be understood by every one acquainted with the scripture, that they are adopted as best calculated to explain what we mean when speaking on subjects of so exalted a nature, and so necessarily involved in mystery. But while that one grand and fundamental doctrine of all is kept in view, namely, the perfect equality in the essence of GODHEAD in all the persons of Jehovah, no man, except from perversity can consider the terms *first*, *second*, or *third*, when applied by way of distinction, in speaking of the persons of the GODHEAD, as carrying with them the

smallest idea of any thing inferior in the one to the other. And for the child of God when regenerated, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he hath in himself such a saving knowledge of the person of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in the equal acts of electing, redeeming, and renewing mercy and grace, as enables him to live by faith, in ascribing equal love, praise, and thanksgiving, to the one glorious undivided Jehovah, as the united source of all blessings.

But from this digression, (in answering the childish objections of unbelievers) let us return to the consideration of other views, in the testimony of the Lord Jesus to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

Among several which might be brought forward, I cannot but consider that a very eminent one which relates to *the unpardonable sin*. That there should be a general, yea, an universal act of grace passed to all manner of sin and blasphemy, committed either against the person of God the Father, or the person of God the Son; and yet that there should be one species of sin, against the person of God the Holy Ghost, never to be pardoned, must imply somewhat of a very striking nature, and highly necessary to be well understood, in order to have a more perfect knowledge concerning the person of God the Holy Ghost. I therefore most earnestly beg the closest attention of the reader on this subject. Yet more I look up and beg of that God, even God the Holy Ghost, against whom this sin which is unpardonable is capable of being committed, that he will open and explain it to our minds.

And *first*, let us hear what the Son of God hath said upon the subject: "Verily I say unto you, (saith Christ) All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation," (Mark iii. 28, 29.)

Observe what a proof this is of the *person* of the Holy Ghost: he is here distinguished by himself, as distinct from the Father and the Son in *personality*. For there is a sin capable of being committed against him that is said to be unpardonable; which if he were not a person could not be done. *Secondly*, we have an equal proof at the same time of his GODHEAD: for if he were not God, sin against him, be it what it might, could not be called *blasphemy;* for this is a species of sin only applicable to offences committed against God. And *thirdly*, if he were not God, this sin, be it what it may, could never be said to be unpardonable: for what sin from man to man is unpardonable? *Fourthly*, the distinction of persons in the GODHEAD is hereby proved; for while Jesus saith, "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" which blasphemy must refer to God as God; the Lord saith, that this sin against the Holy Ghost (which on account of his GODHEAD is blasphemy also) is unpardonable. Now if the Holy Ghost was not a distinct person in the GODHEAD, but only as some would have him, the *spirit* of the Lord, or an *emanation* from the Lord, in this case blasphemy against the *spirit* or *emanation* of the Lord would include the Lord also, and then the distinction of persons would be done away. But when Christ saith, "but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness," the Lord Jesus plainly identifies both his person and his GODHEAD, and confirms *both*. And I venture to assert, against all the infidels of the day, that a more plain, palpable, and decided testimony to the Person and GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost cannot be needed, than what the Son of God hath here brought forward for the confirmation of the faith of the Church.

But let us for a moment suppose, what some wish to have supposed, that the Holy Ghost is but an *emanation* from God. In this sense, an offence committed

against an *emanation* becomes greater than an offence against God; yea, that all manner of blasphemy against God shall be forgiven, but blasphemy against an emanation of God becomes unpardonable! Is there a man of common sense upon earth that can give into such a belief?

But I have a word more to say upon this subject; and as it is solemnly impressed upon my mind, so I pray the Lord it may be on the minds of all the Lord's children. By drawing such a line of distinction as is here drawn between blasphemy committed against the person of the Father and the Son, and that blasphemy here alluded to committed against the Holy Ghost, somewhat more must be meant besides the obvious arguments we have before noticed, and it is a point of great importance to discover it. I ask then, was it not the intention of God the Holy Ghost hereby to testify the quickness of his resentment against those who, while acknowledging the person of the Father, deny his Person, and GODHEAD, and Ministry in the covenant of grace? Did not the Spirit know and *speak expressly*, that in the latter days some would depart from the faith, call the Holy Ghost an *emanation*, and attempt to rob him of his glory? And hath the Lord Jesus thus testified concerning him, in assuring us, that there is a sin capable of being committed against him, which cannot be committed against the Father and himself, and is unpardonable? Oh! that in the present awful day of a God-dishonouring, Christ-despising, Holy Ghost-blaspheming generation, men would take these things to heart, and tremble at those solemn words of Christ: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," (Mat. xii. 32.) And let those judge for themselves, whether the denial of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost,

doth not come within the borders of this unpardonable sin!

I will detain you but with only bringing forward one testimony more of Christ to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; and that I would gather from Christ's last commission to his apostles, in the moment of his return to glory, when he commanded them to baptize in the joint name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Is it possible to conceive any other, but that the Son of God intended by this solemn act, the consecration of the persons so baptized, as equally dedicated to the joint service, worship, obedience, and praise of Jehovah, existing in a trinity of persons.

Let it be supposed for a moment only, that the Son of God, when giving this direction, knew the Holy Ghost to have been but an *emanation;* would he have ordained the ordinance of baptism to have been administered in such words? Would he have said, Go and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the *emanation* of the Father? And yet such in effect is the sense of this form of words, if the Holy Ghost be not a person! Nothing therefore can be more decisive in point, (from this order of Christ) to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; and from hence we derive authority to prove, that being baptized into the joint name of the holy Three in One, the Holy Ghost, in common with the Father and the Son in the essence of GODHEAD, is equally the divine object of faith, love, hope, worship, adoration, and praise.

I have dwelt so largely in bringing before you the testimonies of Christ on this important subject, that I cannot find much space within the limits of a Lecture, to enter minutely into the inquiry for the evidences of the Lord's servants to the same amount. I must study shortness in what remains, and shall therefore only mention a few of the more striking.

What views could the Old testament saints have had of the Holy Ghost, but as one of the persons in the GODHEAD, when from the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, they prophesied of the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow," (1 Pet. i. 11.) They who were under his influence, as well as all the faithful of those days, could not but know that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. i. 21.)

And New testament believers, as well as the apostles of Christ, from the work of grace upon their souls in regeneration, have uniformly borne testimony to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

What were the sentiments of John the Baptist on this subject, whose ministry was altogether from the unction of the Spirit? It was said of him before his birth by the angel, that he should be "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb," (Luke i. 15.) And he that sent him to baptize, as John himself declared, taught him how to know the person of Christ by the Spirit "descending and remaining upon him," (John i. 33, 34.) It were needless to add what the testimony of the Baptist, if called upon, would be to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost!

And what could Stephen mean less, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, but of a person in the GODHEAD, when he charged the Sanhedrim with always resisting the Holy Ghost, and being uncircumcised in heart and ears? The man who it is said was full of the Holy Ghost, when he looked up to heaven, and saw the Lord Jesus standing on the right hand of God, could have no other views of his Person and GODHEAD, than as possessed of all divine power, when he himself felt their full influence.

Let John, the beloved apostle, give in his testimony

concerning the Holy Ghost, and wherein can he differ from what he hath already assured the Church, of the holy Three "which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one," (1 John v. 7.) What would this beloved apostle have said to the heresy of the present day, in hearing the Holy Ghost called an *emanation?*

And what were Peter's thoughts in relation to the Person and GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, when, in charging Ananias with lying to the Holy Ghost, "Thou hast not (said Peter) lied unto men, but unto God?" (Acts v. 3, 4.) And when in the circumstance relating to Cornelius, he was sent by the Spirit on this errand of grace from the Lord, what could the apostle have concluded, but what the centurion himself had said on the same subject; "Now (said he) we are all present here before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God," (Acts x. 19—33.)

Let Paul bring up the rear of those faithful servants of Christ, in giving in their testimony to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; and what a long chain of evidences might he produce of the Spirit's work upon his own soul, in his ordination, ministry, preaching, and writings; to say nothing of the work of God the Holy Ghost, to which the apostles might bear witness on the souls of others!

Supposing the abettors of the present modern *divinity* could have had the apostle to have dealt with, who deny the Person and GODHEAD of the Holy Spirit, and say that he is not a party in the covenant of grace, but simply no other than an *emanation* from God only: with what holy indignation might we suppose the zealous apostle would have received such doctrine. What very awful consequences would follow, if any of the sweet prayers and blessings of Paul were changed by those modern divines. Paul prays that the church might

abound in hope "through the power of the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xv. 3.) But on the supposition the Holy Ghost is not a person, Paul should have said through the power of an *emanation.* And when he begged the church for the love of the Spirit, in this sense Paul must have meant nothing more than the love of an *emanation!* (Rom. xv. 30.) And that very blessed benediction of the apostle, in which he joins together, according to the pure faith of the gospel, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost;" it is the communion of an *emanation,* and not of the Holy Ghost, those men would convert the apostle's blessing into; and they join a mere nonentity with the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son, (2 Cor. 13, 14.) But enough,—it is time to relieve your attention.

You have now had brought before you a long chain of evidences respecting the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. And in addition to the great body of testimonies which have been gathered together before you, from the scriptures of eternal truth, you have now seen in the present Lecture what the Lord Jesus hath said in confirmation of the same momentous doctrine.

I beseech you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that you keep in remembrance who it is that thus testifieth of the Holy Ghost. He is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness," (Rev. iii. 15.) He is Jehovah's "witness also to the people," (Isa. lv. 4;) and as such he stands in the room of ten thousand witnesses to all the truths of his holy word. And therefore, in relation to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost; what the Son of God hath said in the testimonies I have brought before you becomes final and decisive. And although, as the Lord Jesus himself hath said concerning the

Holy Ghost, "the world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him;" yet the Lord Jesus saith of every faithful follower of his, as well as to the apostles, "but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," (John xiv. 16, 17.)

I only for the present add: may He, the almighty Spirit of truth, to whom the Lord Jesus bears such full testimony, graciously confirm his own eternal power and GODHEAD, in the hearts of all his people, by unceasing revelations of himself, and the Father and the Son, to the glory of the One holy and undivided Jehovah, in the face of Jesus Christ.

LECTURE VI.

THE mind of the apostle Paul must have been under sweet influences of grace, when in closing his epistle to to one of the churches, he thus expressed himself: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xv. 13.) Paul was too well and too highly taught not to know that without the power of the Holy Ghost, directing "the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," all the knowledge we have of divine things, like treasure not in use, but laying by, will profit nothing. There must be the quickening work of God the Spirit, to bring into action our apprehension of God the Father's love, and God the Son's redeeming grace, to give that energy in the soul which scripture calls "the full assurance of faith." Let God the Holy Ghost but come with his enlightening influences upon the renewed soul, and then the soul enters into the full enjoyment both of "the love and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

And hence, therefore, it is that as the whole Three Persons in the GODHEAD are equal in nature and in essence; and each hath taken an equal part in all the blessedness appointed for the Church in Christ, in time and to all eternity; so, therefore, equal honour is, and must be, ascribed to each and to all. And that soul who is the subject of sovereign grace, knows nothing yet as he ought to know, of the daily work of God the Spirit, and the necessity of his grace in the heart, who doth not

honour each glorious person in the GODHEAD with equal honour; and ascribe equal adoration, love, and praise to the holy Three "which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: for these three are one," (1 John v. 7.)

And I admire yet more the blessed frame of mind which the apostle was in, when he pronounced this benediction on the Church, because he had his eye to the efficient part of the ministry of God the Holy Ghost, concerning this special act of his grace. For his it is to lead to God and to glorify Christ. His it is to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and to bring all things to our remembrance whatsoever the Lord Jesus hath said to us. His great work is consolation. It is he, and he alone, which is the source of all spiritual enjoyment, in taking of the things of Christ, and shewing to us. So that all these glorious views, which we have at any time of the Father, and of the Son, in their grace and love to us, the Holy Ghost is the author of them. Hence he himself, in his scriptures, calls his acts of grace in the minds of his people, the "communion of the Holy Ghost: because all the communion we have with the persons in the GODHEAD, he is the immediate author and worker of. I cannot stay to tell you (indeed I hope you know it) in how many ways, and in how many methods, both in providence and in grace, the Lord the Spirit works on the hearts of his people: but this I say, and the word of God will bear me out in what I say, from the first moment of regeneration, when the Holy Ghost quickens the sinner which before was dead in trespasses and sins into a new and spiritual life, until he hath finished his work of grace in glory; by his mysterious indwelling in our souls, he brings tokens to us of God the Father's everlasting and unchanging love, day by day, and renders the salvation of Jesus precious; and while revealing the grace of each, he quickens the

soul in returns of praise and love, and thus opens, and keeps open, communion in the soul with the Lord: so that while this grace from him is in lively exercise, we have, and do enjoy, what the apostle calls, "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Allow me to detain you one moment just to remark a very sweet scripture to this amount, by way of improvement as we go. The apostle, speaking of this very subject, saith, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," (Gal. v. 5.) Waiting for the Spirit, shews the vast importance of his grace, to influence the soul of the regenerate into continual action. And certain it is, that until the Holy Ghost opens to the view of a believer the glories of Christ's person, and the completeness and suitableness of his righteousness, there can be no lively actings of faith upon either. I must be led not only to know, and feel my own nothingness, and want of Christ, but also his suitableness and all-sufficiency to supply that want. And when through the Spirit's teaching my soul is perfectly satisfied both with the person of Christ and his righteousness, and all other methods of justification before God are done away for ever in my view; then to be kept waiting daily at the gates of wisdom, even at the mercy-seat of Christ, for the manifestation of his blood and righteousness, this is a blessed frame to enjoy, "the hope of righteousness which is by faith." And this is among the special acts of God the Holy Ghost.

But there are some persons, who, from the want of considering those special acts of God the Holy Ghost, which peculiarly and personally belong to him, and which denote his divine character in the covenant of grace; and also from not connecting with the view his eternal power and GODHEAD, have overlooked the most essential foundation of faith; namely, that however different the acts of the holy Three Persons are, there is

no difference in their nature, power, and GODHEAD; and though distinguished in acts, yet but one in will, purpose, and decree. It is the personal glory of the Father, that the Church is *chosen* by him; it is the personal glory of the Son, that the Church is *redeemed* by him; and it is the personal glory of the Holy Ghost, not only to *regenerate* his people, but to make a *revelation* of the Father's grace and Son's love, in both these acts of grace, in the heart of every individual of the Church.

It is on this account that we do not find so many instances of prayer addressed to the person of the Holy Ghost, as to the Father and the Son. Because it is his work to *indite* prayers, and be to the people of God in prayer, "a Spirit of grace and supplication." His it is to lead the saints in prayer, and as "he searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," he is said "to make intercession for the saints according to the will of God," (Rom. viii. 27.) It forms indeed a most blessed testimony, on this account, to the truth of our holy faith. For as the Holy Ghost teacheth the Lord's people how to pray, and what to pray for, so all that he teacheth them on this ground is in perfect conformity to the will of God, and to the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. By this process of grace, both his Person and GODHEAD is shewn. For if his teaching is the distinct act of his grace, this proves the distinction of *person*, both of the Father and of himself. And if the prayers he prompts the saints to use upon earth, be in exact agreement with the will of God, and the intercession of Christ in heaven, this manifests his GODHEAD; since none but God could know what the will of God is, and what the Lord Jesus in his high priest's character was at that time interceding for his people, before God and the Father.

And it should be no less remembered also, that while this distinction of acts for carrying on the designs of Je-

hovah towards the church, manifests the person of each; so the whole acts themselves, being uniformly directed to the accomplishment of one and the same design, plainly prove that this trinity of persons is but one and the same Jehovah. All prayers and praises, all services and ordinances, are addressed equally to each and to all the whole persons in the GODHEAD. The Old testament blessing, wherewith Aaron was commanded to bless the people, thrice proclaimed the incommunicable name of Jehovah, to intimate the trinity of persons in the GODHEAD, (Numb. vi. 22, &c.) And the New testament blessing, in various parts of that scripture, includes the same, (2 Cor. xiii. 14; Rev. i. 4, 5, 6.) Sometimes one, and sometimes another, of the persons in the GODHEAD, are specially spoken to in prayer, agreeable to the analogy of faith; but the whole GODHEAD is always considered as included. And the whole purport and tendency of revelation is to shew, that while the Church of God, in the individual or collected members of Christ's mystical body, have distinct acts of fellowship and communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all terminates in the unity of the divine essence, and all are directed to his glory, who, though existing in a trinity of persons, is "One Lord, and his name One!" (Zech. xiv. 9.)

The subject which hath engaged your attention in these Lectures, hath been specially and particularly directed in proof to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. In confirmation of this momentous truth, which, if the word of God is to be credited, is the very life of the Church, and without whose teaching the proper apprehension of the person of Christ is not attainable; (since "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3;) I have in the Lectures preceding the present, endeavoured, in a regular and distinct order, to bring before you some of the

plainest scriptural testimonies to this amount. And without going over again the ground already trodden, I would only beg now to gather in one view the leading points which have been insisted upon. A short but clear statement presented together before the mind, may possess an advantage which single detached parts may not bear; as united streams carry a stronger force than when separated from each other. Not however to recapitulate unnecessarily, I would only desire to call to your remembrance the outlines of the whole: and then, as a concluding Lecture, set forth, as far as I am able, the boundless grace of Jehovah in his trinity of persons towards the Church, in thus "making known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him," (Eph. i. 9, 10.)

It will be remembered, that in the opening of those Lectures, the first and great point insisted upon, was the authenticity of those revelations God hath been pleased to make of himself. For as we can know nothing of the nature and essence of Jehovah, but from what he hath condescended to give the Church concerning himself, it is evident that those revelations, and those only the word of God furnisheth, must be accepted as our infallible guide on this momentous doctrine.

My object therefore was first directed to shew you, and to prove no less by numberless testimonies from this unerring source, that while the sacred word sets forth Jehovah in the fullest and clearest manner, in the *unity of the divine essence;* that divine essence, the Lord himself as fully and as clearly hath shewn, to subsist *in a trinity of persons.* And that so glorious and important a truth might bring with it to your mind the full strength of evidence which Scripture gives, I went over

the divine word in gathering before you the various testimonies God is pleased to make known of himself in his trinity of persons. I shewed you that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are equally called Jehovah, and equally possess all divine *attributes* and *perfections*; and in the exercise of sovereignty, and in every act demonstrative of GODHEAD, the word of life from Genesis to Revelations beareth witness, that each divine person is equal and co-eternal.

I dwelt the more full and particular on these points, because they form the basis of every thing connected with the doctrines of our most holy faith. And I insisted the more strongly upon them, as coming to us with God's own testimony of himself; because the belief of one God, existing in a trinity of persons, is so much beyond the faculty of reason to explain, though not contradictory to it to admit, that I considered nothing short of scripture could, or indeed ought, to be admitted, as final and decisive on the occasion. And I carried the point yet further, as relating to life and practice, because that if what the scripture saith be once admitted, that the Church of God, in every individual instance, owes its salvation to the equal and joint acts of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it must follow, that each and all, distinctly as to person, and unitedly as to essence, be loved, and praised, and adored, with equal thanksgiving, by all the objects of divine grace, in this great work of salvation.

Having, in the general view of the subject, thus laid down the scripture testimony to those fundamental truths, I then requested your attention to the more especial and particular design of those Lectures; namely, the proof of the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost. And as in exact conformity to the prophecies of God, concerning the aboundings of heresy in the latter-day dispensation, the blasphemy manifested

to the Person and GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, forms a prominent feature: in opposition to this awful departure from the faith, I have shewn from scripture that those acts of his, which I brought before you, do as fully manifest his eternal power and GODHEAD, as any acts of the Father and of the Son. His unction of the person of the Son of God in our nature, as the head and husband of his Church and people, and his unction of the Church and of every individual member of his mystical body the Church, I thought so highly important to be produced, that in selecting from the word of God the proofs in both instances, I made them the subject of *two whole Lectures*. And I must beg here again to repeat, that so highly demonstrative are they in proof to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, that to reject them must include a rejection with them of the testimony of the word of God. For if the gracious act of *choosing* the Church of Christ before all worlds proves the GODHEAD of the Father; and the *redemption* of the Church by Christ in time proves the GODHEAD of the Son; the *quickening* into *spiritual* and *eternal* life the Church in Christ by the Holy Ghost, must be allowed to be an equal proof of GODHEAD with either of the former, and carries with it the same equal testimony to his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, by whom it is wrought.

In addition to all these evidences, which have occupied the whole of the preceding Lectures; in the *last* I brought before you the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ (followed by his servants who have ministered in his name) to the same doctrine. It became in my view a question of no small importance, humbly to ask our Lord, *Whom doth Jesus say the Holy Ghost is?* You have heard the Lord's answer; and such an answer as cannot fail to clinch the whole, as "a nail fastened in a sure place by the great Master of assemblies!" (Eccles.

xii. 11.) May the Lord give the due strength to it, which it so highly merits in every spiritual mind; and grant to all his redeemed family "a right understanding in all things."

And now having stated all that appears to me to be necessary in confirmation "of this faith once delivered unto the saints," by way of following up the subject in suitable reflections, and as a concluding Lecture to the whole, I would beg to call your attention for a few moments to a view of the boundless grace of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, as manifested to the Church in his revelation of himself. The opposition of all unbelievers, not only to the Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, but, more or less, to all the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of our holy faith, hath arisen from one and the same source; namely, the unhumbled pride of human reason. By way of finish to those Lectures, therefore, and as intimately connected with the professed object of them, I mean to shew you (as the Lord may be pleased to favour) the infinite condescension of God in making any revelation of himself; and that it is in so doing, as the Lord himself expresses it, "making known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself," (Eph. i. 9.) And though this mystery of Jehovah's will is above all the powers of reason, untaught by revelation, to have conceived in the smallest degree; yet, when explained by revelation, is found to be in perfect harmony with reason. Yea, the true believer is supposed to be "always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh for a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear," (1 Peter iii. 15.)

Let me beg your attention to this subject: and when I have finished this service I shall leave the whole to your most serious consideration, under an humble hope of a divine blessing resting upon it from the Lord.

And *first:* In speaking of the boundless grace of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, as manifested to the Church of Christ, I begin with observing, that nothing could add to the divine glory from any revelation Jehovah might be pleased to make of himself. For though the glory of Jehovah is, and must be, the first and ultimate end of all his designs, yet no possible increase can be made to that glory by calling into being any creatures, whether angels or men, much less by making revelation of himself to them. Jehovah in his trinity of persons, having being in himself from all eternity, hath existed in glory unspeakable, yea, incomprehensible, as well as incommunicable, to any other. And as the holy Three in One, according to what we read in scripture, hath from everlasting lived in the mutual enjoyment of each other, have conversed together, entered into covenant together, in things pertaining to the Church; so we are led to conclude that from their union and oneness in all designs, purpose, will, and pleasure, the happiness and glory of Jehovah is in himself, from himself, and to himself, and so infinitely full and complete, as can admit of no possible increase. Sooner might the noise of the thunder be rendered louder by our feeble voice, or the Atlantic ocean receive increase from our tears, than addition can be made to God's glory by the praises of men or angels. Jehovah is in himself an ocean of blessedness, and incapable of being more blessed.

This doctrine is so very obvious, that it should seem hardly necessary to have mentioned it; but yet, though well known, and when spoken of fully allowed by all godly persons, it is so generally overlooked and forgotten, that in our vain moments we are very apt to conceive we add to God's glory when we speak of his praise. Let it be noted, therefore, as the *first* observation I wish to offer, that neither men nor angels can be profitable to God. The holy persons in the GODHEAD had glory

and blessedness unspeakable in themselves from all eternity. Neither could the calling into being creatures, whether angels or men, bring addition to God in either. So that the revelation which Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath condescended to make of himself, is free sovereign grace; not to add to *Him*, but to give to *us;* not to make *Him* more blessed or glorious, for that is impossible; but to make the *Church* everlastingly holy and happy; and all this "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," (Eph. i. 6.)

Secondly; laying this down as a truth incapable of being disputed or mistaken, let us pass on to another observation arising out of it, in respect to the infinite condescension of Jehovah, in making any revelation of himself; namely, his calling into being a Church, in the everlasting happiness of which might be shewn, as manifested in a trinity of persons, "the manifold wisdom of God."

The Holy Ghost, by Paul, hath summed up in a single verse, Jehovah's designs on this great point, and expressed all that can be needful, in order to prove the object of those divine revelations the Lord hath made concerning the "mystery of his will." He saith, and it is unanswerable, that the one great motive for which the Lord went forth in a way of revelation to the Church, was, and is, that "in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," (Eph. ii. 7.) Jehovah abounded in riches, abounded in grace, abounded in love; and in his trinity of persons, he was therefore pleased to make a manifestation of the whole to his people, whom he hath chosen. "God, (saith Paul,) who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us," (Eph. ii. 4.)

Now of all the plans in the infinite stores of wisdom and power, which he possesseth, the one gracious me-

thod Jehovah was pleased to adopt, in order to make himself most blessedly known to his Church, in his trinity of persons, was to demonstrate by personal acts the love, and grace, and favour of each glorious person; so that the Church might have clear apprehensions of each, with their favour and affection, and at the same time discover that all, and every blessing, is the joint result of the one almighty Jehovah in a trinity of persons. This appears, from holy scripture, to have been the gracious plan of God, in making known to the Church "the mystery of his will."

Hence, in conformity to this divine system of love and grace, we read in several parts of scripture of certain eternal transactions which took place in the council and covenant, between the persons of the GODHEAD; in which each glorious person went forth in acts of divine love towards the Church in special and distinct manifestations, as might define each person in the GODHEAD, while all resulted from the joint will and pleasure of the one undivided Jehovah.

I stay not to point out what those special and distinct manifestations were, having already noticed them in several parts of those Lectures. I only now refer to the things themselves, by way of proof of Jehovah's everlasting love to the Church, in those eternal transactions. The *choice* of the Church, in Christ by the Father; and the *marriage* of the Church by the Son; and the *anointing* or *setting* apart both the head of the Church and members by the Holy Ghost: these were all transactions carried on by the persons of the GODHEAD, before all worlds. And these blessings not only distinguish the persons in the GODHEAD, but manifest the special love of each person in the GODHEAD to the Church; inasmuch as they are not the result of our redemption *by* Christ, but of our relationship *to* Christ; the Father having "chosen the Church in him before the foundation of the world," (Eph. i. 4.)

Thirdly; prosecuting this subject yet further, in order to the discovery of what Jehovah hath made known concerning *the mystery of his will:* when from looking into the scriptural account of the transactions *in eternity* on this subject, we come down to the period *of time*, in what is called in the word of God, *the beginning;* we there discover, under divine teaching, yet more of Jehovah's love and grace to his people.

We here behold Jehovah in his trinity of persons going forth in acts of *creation*, and calling into being this magnificent world, with all its vast and various apparatus, as a platform for exhibiting the grace and love Jehovah in his trinity of persons was about to manifest to the Church of Christ. Hence we read of the six days works of creation of the earth and heavens, and all the host of them, with all the inferior creatures; and, lastly, of the council held by the persons of the GODHEAD for the creation of man. And when the whole was completed, we are told that "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good," (Gen. i. 31.) When Jehovah in his trinity of persons had accomplished these things, all appeared so lovely to the angels who looked on and beheld the wonders of creation, that, speaking in the language of scripture, it is said, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," (Job xxxviii. 7.)

Fourthly; but Jehovah had a deeper *mystery of his will* yet to unfold. The works of *creation*, though accomplished by the whole persons in the GODHEAD, did not reveal so clear to the view each divine person, as the Lord was pleased should be known by the Church; and, therefore, in the fall of man, Jehovah opened to a prospect which hitherto had laid hid in his own bosom, in which the footsteps of his love in his trinity of persons might be fully revealed, and *redemption* by Christ blessedly make known unto the Church "the whole counsel

of God." The apostle Paul, when his whole soul was on fire, and speaking of this subject, declared that the great object of his ministry was to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Eph. iii. 1—11.)

Here, therefore, we learn that not *creation*, but *redemption*, was the great plan which lay hid in God, whereby the trinity of the persons in the GODHEAD should be revealed. For here ample scope was afforded for the discovery of the personal love of each. And the Holy Ghost, by Paul, tells us in this scripture, that one intent, among others, was, that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (meaning the angels, and if there are any higher order of beings, not of flesh and blood) they might learn from the Church of this "manifold wisdom of God."

I have often thought with what wonder and surprise those sons of God (as they are called) which shouted for joy in beholding the works of creation, must have beheld the ruin of the whole which so shortly followed in the fall of man! For angels, no more than man, could form the smallest conception of *redemption*. They knew not of what Paul calls the "fellowship of the mystery which lay hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ!" And certain it is that Jehovah, in the invisibility and incomprehensibility of his nature, is no more known to them than to us. They knew no more of God than as he is known and beheld in Jesus Christ—"God manifest in the flesh;" and then, and not before, "seen of

angels," (1 Tim. iii. 24;) so that here angels had to learn divine things. And what divine things among the "manifold wisdom of God" like those which gave them, as well as us, suitable and becoming apprehensions of the existence of Jehovah in a trinity of persons? What more blessed for them to learn than of the eternal purpose which Jehovah purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord? These things, we are told, "angels desire to look into;" and well they may. For what lay hid in the bosom of God from all eternity, must be a subject worthy the everlasting study of all his intelligent creatures; so that the redemption of man engageth the perpetual inquiry of angels; and the Church of the living God is the university where angels, as well as men, are put to school to get information of this "manifold wisdom of God."

Fifthly; for we must not stop here. In studying the boundless grace of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, there is one point more, and that a very glorious one, in which the Lord hath made known *the mystery of his will;* namely, in the manifestation of *mercy.* This divine attribute, as appears from both testaments of scripture, is what the Lord God greatly delights in; and by the revelation he hath been pleased to make of himself to the Church, all along intended above all others to exalt. And yet it is evident, that had not the Lord of himself opened some method in the stores of his Omnipotency, for the display of this perfection, there could have been no opportunity for making it known; for mercy hath to do only with misery. It is on objects and subjects of wretchedness that mercy finds scope for exercise. The love of God, and the power of God, and the wisdom of God, yea, all other divine attributes, may find, and have found, ample room for manifestation. But when the Lord wisheth to make himself known as a God of mercy, it is "in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," (Exod. xxxiv. 7.)

Here then we look somewhat into the plan of the divine counsel in the wonders of redemption. Had Jehovah when he chose the Church in Christ before all worlds, "to be holy and without blame before him in love;" had he taken the Church at once to glory, without passing through this time-state here below; in this case, the Church falling into no sin, would never have needed mercy. But the Lord Jehovah, to aggrandize and exalt his dear Son, that the Church should know him in a double relation, both as an Husband and as a Redeemer, in the stupendous dispensation of the fall of man, and the redemption by Christ here has opened (as the apostle speaks) a way to display the "riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory," (Rom. ix. 23.) And this was that vast mystery of grace which lay hid in the bosom of Jehovah from all eternity; known only among the trinity of persons, and unknown to angels, until revealed openly in Christ Jesus. Hence Paul declared, that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Eph. iii. 10, 11.)

But what I am chiefly desirous to call your attention to, and indeed is the very design of those Lectures, is to remark, what a blessed and gracious method this proved by way of revealing the personality of the holy three persons in the GODHEAD. It must be confessed indeed, and with much thanksgiving, that in the works of *creation* the Lord Jehovah did not leave himself without witness to his trinity of persons. But it was, and is, in *redemption*, the clear manifestation of each glorious person is more clearly seen, and the blessed three *witnesses* in heaven, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," become witnesses also to the souls of the Lord's people upon earth: for "these Three are One," (1 John v. 7.)

It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to trace those divine witnesses, in their personal testimony to every child of God; and for every child of God to have a personal testimony in his own heart to the truth of it. God the Father hath manifested, in numberless instances, his personal love to the Church in Christ, in those gracious acts which define both Person and GODHEAD, and hath thereby set forth the most illustrious proofs of the same. The gift *of* his dear Son, and the gift of the Church *to* his dear Son; and not only as the glorious head of election, and of all the elect in him; but in that marvellous act also, as a Redeemer and Saviour: these become the highest testimonies of his determination of making himself known, as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." Hence those numberless scriptures: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii. 16.) "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," &c. (Rom. v. 8.) And in short, without making reference to a great variety of passages in the bible, which confirm the same, it may be said, that the display of mercy is the leading feature of the whole gospel. God our Father himself calls upon the Church to glory in this discovery of his grace, beyond the possession of all wisdom, might, or riches. "Let him (saith the Lord) that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord," (Jer. ix. 24.) And his servant the prophet, when speaking of his unequalled goodness, in "pardoning iniquity, and passing by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage," cries out in an ecstacy of holy joy, "Who is a God like unto thee? He retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy," (Micah vii. 18, &c.)

And if we trace the footsteps of God the Son, in his personal acts, as manifested to the Church, what volumes of love and mercy are opened to view! His union with his Church *before* all time, and his redemption of his Church to all eternity *in* time, are such vast subjects of revelation, as shew forth every thing that is endearing and affectionate in the Son of God. And from the whole of this stupendous work, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath wrought out, by his own personal sufferings and death, we trace somewhat at least of the outlines of that *mystery of God's will*, which occupied the eternal mind in his trinity of persons from everlasting.

But while we contemplate the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, as manifested in redemption, and consider it as among the highest acts of love and grace shewn to the Church; yet it should be remembered, that redemption itself, in all its blissful consequences, was evidently ordained more to magnify and exalt the Son of God, than to benefit man. Our advantages indeed are thereby immense, and incalculably great; but the glory of Christ in it is infinitely greater. We must indeed have been lost for ever, had not the Son of God redeemed us. But without that work the Son of God wrought by redemption in his blood, the crown the Mediator now wears as Redeemer would not have shone on his almighty head. Oh! what unnumbered glories doth our Lord Jesus possess by this act of his! And what new trophies are given to him upon every renewed occasion, when any poor sinner puts the crown of his own personal salvation on his sacred head. This is what John saw in those visions, with which he was favoured, for the Church's benefit, when he beheld Christ "on his white horse, and on his head were many crowns," (Rev. xix. 11, 12.) Thus Christ was crowned, when having finished redemption work he returned to heaven. And thus is he again crowned, when by the Holy Ghost the

regenerated sinner is enabled to crown him in his heart here on earth.

And surely redemption by Christ hath opened so blessed an occasion also for God the Holy Ghost, to manifest his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry to the Church, as nothing short of this plan of grace could have done. Here, indeed, in a very eminent degree and manner, hath been opened *the mystery of God's will.* I need not enlarge on this part of the subject, neither detain you to relate, after what hath been already brought before you in the course of those Lectures, what unceasing agency the Holy Ghost hath exercised in this department of his almighty work, on the subject of Christ's redemption. It was most truly and blessedly said, by the Lord Jesus himself, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, in his work, as a party of the covenant of grace; "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew unto you," (John xvi. 14.) And since the Son of God returned to glory, how abundantly hath he done it in the thousand and ten thousand instances manifested to all his people! From the day of Pentecost to this hour, what acts of grace hath he wrought in regenerating, quickening, comforting, and strengthening the souls of the redeemed in Christ! How sweetly hath he opened and explained to the Church the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which hath followed; and what proofs hath he thereby given of his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, in making known the "mystery of Jehovah's will, according to the riches of his grace!"

Let the child of God, who is truly taught of God, pause over these things; and then let him say, what boundless grace must it have been of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, to have adopted such a plan of mercy, in order to make known *the mystery of his will.* What infinite condescension, in each glorious person coming

forward to make known, by special and peculiar acts of favour, the person of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! And when to the *outward* testimony of his word, the blessed Spirit gives the *inward* illumination of his grace, then those sweet effects follow which the apostle so much longed for in the Church: that "their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. ii. 2.)

Let the child of God look to this as the summit of attainment from the whole. It is indeed the *coronis* of the subject; it is the culminating point which crowns all: for this makes it a *living* principle. And the child of God, when possessing it, may say to the preacher of God's truths, as the Samaritans did to the woman who first brought them acquainted with Christ: "Now we believe, (said they) not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!" (John iv. 42.)

I cannot tell you what rapture of the soul that is which ariseth from such an heartfelt enjoyment of these precious things. And though I am free to confess, that the steady, fixed, permanent joy of the soul, in every truly regenerated child of God, consists more in the proper apprehension of the person of Christ and his finished work, in his "having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," than in the fruits of this salvation wrought in the heart by God the Holy Ghost, (for these are but *effects*, while Christ alone is the *cause*); yet I am equally free to confess, that it is blessed to "know the joyful sound, and to walk in the light of the Lord's countenance."

For my own part, though I would never send any child of God to judge of his state before God by his experiences, no more than I would go to such things for myself; but make Christ in his person, blood, and righteousness, what God hath made him, the Alpha and Omega of all trust, and of all sensible enjoyments; (for this is always the same;) yet, while keeping for ever in view God's love in Christ, it is blessed to feel the soul alive in the actings of faith going after him.

Perhaps I shall appear singular; but if it be a weakness, it may methinks be easily pardoned. The reader will not be offended when I say, that sometimes, and not unfrequently, I run over those sweet portions of scripture which, like golden chains linked together, hang by each other, and give beauty and strength to the whole when unitedly taken. Thus, for example, in Paul's first chapter to the Ephesians. Here we have some blessed ascriptions of praise to each person in the GODHEAD, which follow each other in order; and as musical sounds when in sweet concord are grateful to the ear, from the harmony they together bring, so I, while running over these more than heavenly notes one by one, as the Holy Ghost hath recorded them, find a melody in them which charms my soul.

Speaking of the *electing love* of God in Christ,—the note is, "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world," (ver. 4.)

Speaking of our *adoption* as children by Jesus Christ to himself,—the note is, "According to the good pleasure of his will," (ver. 5.)

Speaking of our *redemption* by Christ, and the forgiveness of sins through his blood,—the note is, "According to the riches of his grace," (ver. 7.)

Speaking of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, in having made known unto us the mystery of his will,—

the note is, "According to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself," (verses 8, 9.)

Speaking of the *inheritance* to which, by these acts of grace, resulting from the joint love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we are predestinated,—the note is, "According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," (ver. 12.)

Speaking of the greatness of his acts, as exerted in the accomplishment of these immense mercies, it is compared to that sovereignty which was shewn at the resurrection of our Lord,—and the note is, "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," (verses 19, 20.)

And to sum up all, the apostle in a following chapter, speaking of the *first* cause and *final* end of all these stupendous things, refers them back to the love of God before all time, and extending to all eternity,—and the note is, "According to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Eph. iii. 11.)

I hope the reader will pardon me when I say, that often as I lie in bed, or walk by the way, I chime one after another these harmonious portions, and find in them a blessed concord of sweeter sounds than can be found in pipe or organ.

And now, in closing the whole, I shall leave the subject to your most serious consideration, under the grace of God, wherein we stand: entreating that almighty Lord, of whose Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry I have presumed to speak, that he will mercifully pardon all errors contained in those Lectures, and be pleased, in every instance of his people, to accompany this feeble ministry of his word (so far as is agreeable to his truth) by the powerful operation of his grace; and "make manifest the savour of his knowledge by it in every place."

I am free to confess, that in my view the doctrine itself is so intimately connected with the very vitals of salvation, that with it must stand or fall every thing momentous and interesting in the gospel. For to deny his Person, his GODHEAD, and Ministry, to whose efficient power the whole work of regeneration, with all its blissful consequences, is committed, is to deny the only means by which the divine purposes in redemption can be accomplished, and to "do despite to the Spirit of grace." And very sure it is, that they who do so, rob the Holy Ghost of his glory and themselves of comfort; and thereby plainly testify, that they know nothing of any work of regeneration on their own souls. And of all such the scripture hath decidedly said, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," (Rom. viii. 9.)

And there is somewhat so very presumptuous in the creed of such men, as makes all humble souls tremble. For the whole of their opinion is founded on human invention and supported by human reasoning, in direct opposition to the word of God. For the word of God sweetly proclaims the testimony of the holy Three which bear record in heaven. And the Church is both baptized and blessed in the joint names of the holy Three. We pray, saith Paul, that "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen." But these men would tell us, that these are not *persons*, but *offices;* for according to their doctrine, there is but one person in the GODHEAD! So that when we read, that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, it meant that he sent himself! When he sent the Holy Ghost, he sent himself! It was but one and the same person that both sent, and was sent, that offered himself for sin, and became an offering; and when he cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" It

was but one and the same person, and consequently he spoke to himself!

Surely so preposterous an idea needs only to be mentioned in proof of its absurdity. And the many conversations which the scriptures abound with, which have taken place between the persons of the GODHEAD, refute at once the ill-founded doctrine. The prayer of Christ to the Father, as recorded in the 17th chapter of John's gospel, (to mention no more) is enough in point. From beginning to end, the Thou, and Me, and Us, we meet with, more or less in every verse, can have no meaning whatever, unless the distinction of persons be admitted.

And while I am upon this subject, let me add, that somewhat akin to this creed is that of another class of men, who though acknowledging a trinity of persons in the GODHEAD, and not denying the sovereignty of Jehovah in the acts of grace, yet, at the same time, render that grace subject to the will of man, and thus reduce the salvation by Christ to an uncertainty, whether a single soul should be saved or not. There is somewhat so contradictory in this faith, also to the principles of sound reason, as well as revelation, as is not to be explained by any arguments whatever. For upon the presumption that Jehovah possesseth (as this class of Christians allow) infinite power, and is desirous, as they say, that the sinner of every description shall be saved; yet, by subjecting that salvation to every man's own will, they reduce both the power of God, and the will of God, to a matter of uncertainty. So that according to this system, God both wills and desires every man's salvation, and hath infinite power to accomplish the same; yet the will of man may be superior to both, by his own perversity, and thus he, and not God, in this instance, is omnipotent. But how effectually doth one passage in the word of God put an end to all such in-

conclusive reasonings: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," (Ps. cx. 3.)

But to the Church of God "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," as Jude describes, let me observe in the words of the same apostle: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost: keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," (Jude 20.)

And see to it, that our acknowledgement of the "faith once delivered unto the saints" is not a mere assent of the understanding unconnected with the conviction of the heart. It is possible, yea, more than possible, for men to subscribe to all the articles of faith, in an *outward* profession of them, while wholly destitute of any *inward* principle of grace. But nothing short of a saving knowledge can be profitable to the soul. It is indeed a sad sign of the present awful times to find the glorious doctrines of a trinity of persons in the GODHEAD so little regarded; but I never can say enough, by way of caution to the Church of God, that none should sit down contented with a bare acknowledgment of "the truth as it is in Jesus;" resting in "the form," while destitute of "the power of godliness."

The Lord the Spirit give his blessing to all his people, that in the clear apprehension and personal enjoyment of the several acts of grace from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the whole Church of God may know and live in the unceasing faith of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence; that "our faith may not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."

I close all in looking up to God for that divine blessing of Jehovah in his trinity of persons both of the Old testament and the New. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon

thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," (Numb. vi. 22, to the end.)

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen," (2 Cor. xiii. 14.)

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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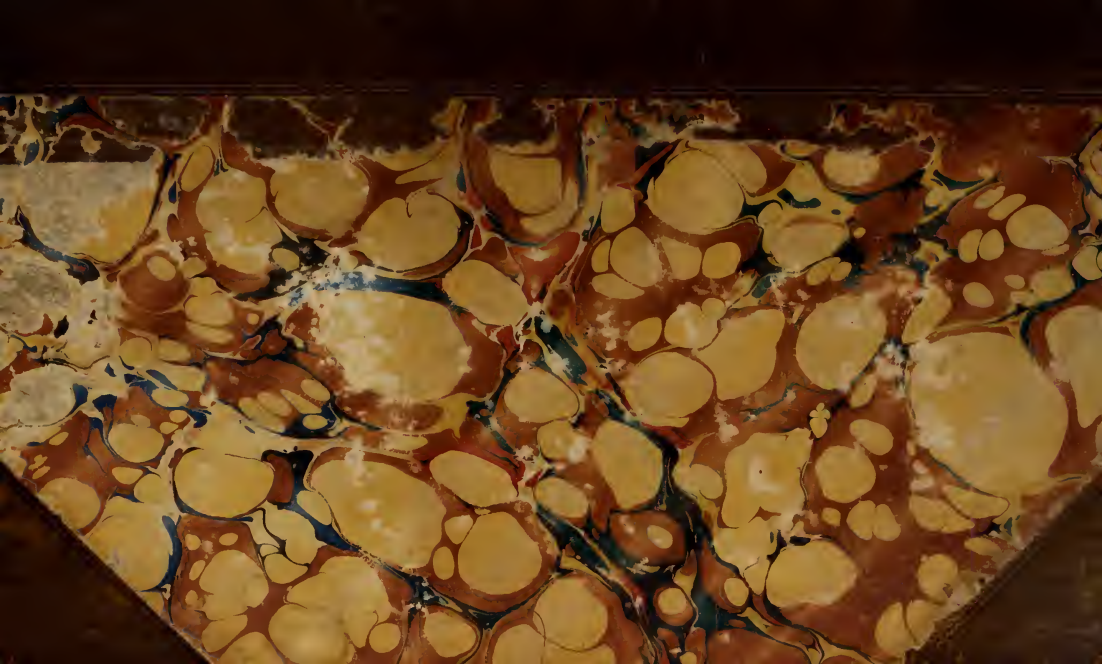
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